

**STUDENT IDENTIFIED LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES, SKILLS,  
BEHAVIORS AND TRAINING NEEDS: PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE  
NEWSPAPER EDITORS**

A Dissertation

by

ALICE J. ROWLANDS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2005

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

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Approved as to style and content by:

---

Larry M. Dooley  
(Chair of Committee)

---

Ben D. Welch  
(Member)

---

Lloyd J. Korhonen  
(Member)

---

Christine D. Townsend  
(Member)

---

Jim Scheurich  
(Head of Department)

May 2005

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

## **ABSTRACT**

Student Identified Leadership Competencies, Skills, Behaviors and Training Needs:  
Perspectives of College Newspaper Editors.

(May 2005)

Alice J. Rowlands, B.A., University of South Alabama;

M.A., University of West Florida

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Larry M. Dooley

This study identified the leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs most critical to a college newspaper leader's success. A Web-based Delphi technique, supported by the Center for Distance Learning Research at Texas A&M University, was used to submit three rounds of questionnaires to a panel of 25 editors from 19 institutions in 13 states.

The experts responded to 13 open-ended questions in Round One designed to elicit information to establish the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors critical to college newsroom leaders. Round One also established information concerning participants' prior knowledge of the top leadership position.

The Round Two instrument included seven questions with 189 statements developed from responses to Round One. Panelists rated responses using a four-point Likert scale.

Panelists reached consensus in the final round by selecting the three most important of the ranked responses to each question returned from Round Two. Additional questions asked for recommendations for the future training and development of editors.

The panel's list of leadership traits agrees with more than 50 percent of the admired traits of all leaders (Kouzes and Posner, 1997), and more than 50 percent of the ideal traits of top professional journalists (Peters, 2001).

The panel reached consensus on 8 situations they considered unique to the college newsroom that had a significant impact on their leadership experience. The top

three included: the need to manage everything and still publish a great paper, dealing with uncommitted students, and dealing with frequent staff changes.

The panel reached consensus on the following as most important for incoming college newsroom leaders: the most critical leadership competency was "ability to communicate"; the most critical leadership behavior was "a passion to improve and develop the newspaper"; the most critical leadership competency editors "lacked" was "ability to take charge"; the experiences they considered most important to shaping their understanding of the role was that it is a full-time, difficult, and frustrating position; and they indicate that "dedication to the newspaper" is the leadership trait that separates an average from a great newsroom leader.

## **DEDICATION**

### **David**

This dissertation would not have been possible without the constant encouragement of my husband, David, who takes all my dreams and aspirations to heart, and then provides the strength and guidance that makes them a reality. All good that springs from this effort can forever be traced to him.

### **Elizabeth, Joshua, Joan, and Alice Catherine**

During my journey to complete this doctoral degree I was never without the constant support and encouragement of my daughter, Elizabeth and my son, Joshua. They both modeled the way—Elizabeth by earning a degree in veterinary medicine and Joshua by earning a bachelor's degree. Joshua also dedicated many hours to reading and editing this dissertation. My sister, Joan, continued to provide the unconditional love that has sustained me through every significant event of my life. And when all of us became discouraged, there was Alice Catherine, who has distinguished herself as a scholar at the tender age of 13.

### **Douglas**

Throughout this process, I had the ear and the watchful eye of a devoted friend who reminded me that the journey was worthwhile and that he would always, without fail, read one more chapter.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Larry Dooley, for agreeing to chair my doctoral committee and for seeing me through the long and challenging journey on my way to completing the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. His support and encouragement "in loading the wagon" were critical to my success. I would also like to thank him for his expert guidance in helping me to choose the members of my committee, and to thank each of them for agreeing to serve. Each member of my committee played a unique and significant role in helping me to complete my academic requirements and accomplish my research goals. Dr. Christine Townsend provided expertise in leadership, especially in the formative stages of my research. Dr. Lloyd Korhonen, director for the Center for Distance Learning Research permitted me to use the CDLR and its staff to conduct my Web-based study. Dr. Ben Welch served as an ideal role model who never failed to offer substantial support and encouragement no matter how busy he was with professional and personal responsibilities. Interacting with him truly was one of the many rewards that came as a result of my journey at Texas A&M University.

The most difficult part of my journey was the design and implementation of the Web-based Delphi study. It would have been impossible for me to implement the critical initial steps without the patience and knowledge of Dr. Rod Ham. His counsel was invaluable to my study. I simply could not have proceeded without his pragmatic approach and ability to clarify the process. He has my deepest respect and admiration as a scholar and a teacher. I am also grateful for the help of Joseph Antony, my CDLR Web-master, who along with me, learned to overcome the obstacles and meet the challenges of designing and executing an electronically based Delphi study. This was "baptism by fire" for both of us. He is a very talented and composed individual who balanced his many responsibilities with poise. Also, throughout the year-long process, when I was working at a disadvantage because of my commute from Houston, I was blessed with the help of Marcia Wenck, customer service associate for the CDLR. She was extremely professional and always very helpful in solving any issues within her ability to address.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Bill Ashworth, Jr. administrative coordinator for the Department of Educational Human Resource Development. He is extremely knowledgeable concerning all aspects of the procedures and requirements within the department. More importantly, he is very generous with his time and support in imparting this knowledge to graduate students.

The most rewarding part of my journey was, without exception, my experience with the college newspaper editors or former editors who served as panel members for this study. Most students willing to assume the top leadership role of a college newspaper are bright, dedicated, mature, and motivated people who set themselves apart through their ability to balance numerous responsibilities while making significant contributions of time and talent to their peers and the continuation of their college newspaper. They deserve far more recognition for their efforts to mentor and teach their peers who look to them for knowledge and opportunity to grow as journalists and leaders. The panel members for this study epitomize all of these qualities and more. Their dedication and enthusiasm for the study showed their true love and respect for their craft. In every round of the study, regardless of the number of questions or the time commitment involved, they persevered. My experience with the panel proved to be enlightening, rewarding, and gratifying.

And finally, I would like to thank my students and former students of Houston Baptist University, for your enthusiasm, encouragement, and help throughout this journey.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The subject of leadership, its development, and how best to train individuals has been and continues to be a heavily researched and popularly discussed topic (Harris 1994, p. 396). Conger (1999) states it is more important now than ever that we continue the investigation of leadership because twenty-first century challenges will require more of leaders in every organization. In order to help new and seasoned leaders meet today's challenges Conger (1999) states:

It is imperative that we take a hard look at the competencies that will be needed by our future leaders and our current methods of training them. It is critical that we do so now because to the extent that our current leadership models are based on the requirements of previous decades, we put our leaders—and our organizations as a whole—at a great disadvantage in the years to come. (p. 239)

Research studies conducted by Kouzes and Posner (1997) have identified certain attributes considered critical to all effective leaders. Kouzes and Posner interviewed several thousand business and government executives over the past two decades to discover the characteristics they valued in leaders. Respondents consistently selected “honest,” “forward-looking,” “inspiring,” and “competent” as the four most essential leadership prerequisites (p. 26). As a result of their research, Kouzes and Posner state that “leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they are doing their best. And this behavior varies little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, and country to country” (p. xxiii).

Heilbrunn (1996) argues, however, that the focus of studies in the leadership field has been too broad in trying to develop a generic model of leadership that can be applied to all leadership roles. He states that “Leadership studies lack an adequate concern for context, historical or situational.... Studies neglect the variety of arenas in which different kinds of leaders operate” (p. 8). As a result of academic neglect, he states, “we

are largely clueless as to what makes a strong religious leader, culture leader, reform leader, intellectual leader, sports leader” (p. 9).

Some organizations, including the newspaper industry, have commissioned studies to identify critical leadership attributes specific to their unique cultures. The need for stronger professional newsroom leadership has been the topic of increasing interest and research at the most respected journalism institutes, foundations, and schools in the nation. Buckner (2001) states this increased interest in leadership is the result of significant industry issues such as rapid changes in technology, competition for talent, credibility gaps, budget shortfalls, and changes in readership.

Peters (2001) surveyed 1,151 journalists nationwide to discover the state of newsroom leadership at 21 small, midsize, and metropolitan newspapers. Peters found: There is widespread agreement among non-supervisors and middle management that the three most critical traits of top editors include: sound judgment, hiring and promoting wisely, and setting high standards. Top editors chose hiring and promoting wisely, communicating mission/goals, and setting high standards as the three most critical traits of top editors (p. 40).

Peters concedes there is no such thing as the ideal leader, but she emphasizes there is value in knowing if there is widespread agreement about the most revered traits. She explains that a leader who lacks a trait considered to be critical to leadership is more likely to encounter problems with followers than a leader who lacks a trait that is regarded as less critical.

Bass (1990) reports that although the study of leadership has broadened since the 1980s, with reports on executives and senior officials continuing to increase, the proportionate number of studies on college students and young participants has continued to decrease (p. xi). In fact, although critical leadership skills have been identified for professional newsroom leaders, there are no studies that focus exclusively on identifying these same leadership qualities of successful college newsroom leaders—those students most likely to seek jobs in the newspaper industry. Ingelhart (1993) states that “The Newspaper Fund, maintained by Dow-Jones, has reported that approximately 90 percent of college journalism graduates hired by American daily newspapers have

earned their professional appointments as a direct result of significant staff experience on student newspapers” (p. 106). The college newspaper is viewed as a primary tool for teaching writing, reporting, editing, management, sales, budgeting, advertising, design, public relations, and law, all of which are vital functions of the college newspaper and are also part of the college newspaper training experience (Nelson, 1988 as cited in Brandon, 2002).

Since most campus newspapers function much in the same way professional newspapers function, it is generally assumed that the skills students need to be successful at the student newspaper level will mirror those needed to be successful at the professional newspaper level. For this reason, many journalism students use the campus newspaper as a training ground for future jobs in the professional newspaper industry. While it may be true that journalism skills, such as reporting and writing, do mirror those needed by professional journalist, this may not be true for key leadership skills.

Many of the leadership skills necessary to be an effective college newsroom leader may be identical to all leaders or to those of professional journalists. However, in order to ensure the best leadership experience for the student journalist, it is important to identify the most critical leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors specific to college newsroom leadership roles. Identifying these skills, as well as significant similarities and differences in student and professional newsroom leaders, will help provide a baseline for training entry-level journalists for leadership positions in both college and professional newsrooms.

Confirming and developing those unique skills may have a profound effect on students' overall view of leadership and ultimately their desire to remain in the field or accept a leadership role when they reach the professional level. This is especially important according to a recent survey conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which indicates that developing strong leadership skills is more critical now, than at any time in the past, to the future success of professional journalists (Buckner, 2001).

Student journalists, like most professional journalists, who ascend to the role of managing editor or editor in chief, commonly have strong reporting, writing and editing

skills, but have little or no leadership experience or training. They are socialized leaders—leaders who have learned their leadership skills from watching other leaders, from anecdotal advice, or from trial and error. Most college newspaper advisers are aware of the strong leadership skills required for editors to be effective in that top leadership role. To their credit, some have endeavored to include leadership training as part of orientation workshops for new and returning staff members at the beginning of each academic year. Most of these advisers, like their students, are “socialized” leaders who have acquired their leadership philosophies on the job and not as a result of formal education in the scholarly discipline of leadership theory. This is not to say that many of their philosophies are without merit; simply that they are not informed by research or theory.

Experts tell us that future leaders can no longer rely on trial and error or anecdotal models to prepare them for the challenges of leadership. They also emphasize that leadership models, which command followers to “follow the leader” based on the leader's title and authority, are no longer effective models. This may be especially true in the newsroom culture where editors are often described as “benevolent dictators” who can be “fearsome and cruel figures of absolute authority or helpful and gentle mentors” (Hart, 2000, p. 20). Hart explains “Most newspaper veterans can remember the shaking knees that threatened to fail them when they faced an old-time city editor...” (p. 20). He acknowledges that the description of newsroom leaders as “red-faced, cigar-chomping, whiskey-swelling curmudgeon, a newsroom tyrant with the vocabulary of a longshoreman and a heart cast from hot lead” is often exaggerated, but also acknowledges the stereotype “has its roots based in reality” (p.20). Hart states that this “curmudgeon model” is no longer accepted in newsrooms. He emphasizes that “it becomes increasingly poor form in the newsroom, where...most editors recognize that pounding on the desk with your shoe is no way to build a career” (p. 20). According to Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) this authoritarian style of leadership is ill suited for modern organizations.

Burkett (2001) cites Conger as stating that developing leadership skills will be more important than ever for future newsroom leaders because they must face a

generation of new staff members who do not respond to authority and formal management. Burkett also quotes Conger as stating “most young people have no experience with the military model. And they don't like to be told what to do” (Conger as cited in Burkett, 2001, p. 11). Miller (2001) agrees with Conger that authority alone is insufficient for effective leadership. He states, “You can order people to do something, but eventually coercion will erode confidence in your leadership” (p. 19).

Unlike their professional counterparts, student leaders have had even more trouble relying solely on authority, because the “benevolent dictator” model does not work well for student newspapers where the staff works for long hours for little or no pay. As a result, many college newsroom leaders attribute their successes or failures to their ability to develop their leadership skills, rather than relying on authority.

Despite complaints about the need for leadership skill development and training from student editors, college newspaper advisers, and professional journalists who deem leadership development to be “critically important” to professional newsroom leaders, (Buckner, 2001b, p. 5) journalism schools do not include leadership courses in the core curriculum.

In an attempt to address the leadership development and training needs of student newspaper editors, some student media organizations offer leadership seminars during state and national student journalism conventions. Some student newspaper advisers conduct leadership workshops for their students and some students attend summer leadership seminars designed for large state or regional universities. Two of the most prominent are a joint program by the University of Georgia College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the Cox Institute for Newspaper Management Studies and one sponsored by the Western Association of University Publication Managers (WAUPM). Each of these programs consists of one week of instruction; however, the majority of leadership seminars and workshops last less than one day. The workshops are short, they do not concentrate on leadership, and, at best, only reach a small percentage of the editors in chief at the more than 1,800 college student newspapers across the country. In addition, these workshops or seminars have little or no follow-up training, a key component, experts tell us, for successful course design. Conger (1992) states that “a

single, one time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change” (p.192).

Most of these leadership seminars and workshops base their instructional material on anecdotal evidence of what professional journalists, college advisers, and incoming student editors say they think is important to that leadership role. They are not based on scholarly studies that identify the needs of college newsroom leaders. The design of these programs, including the topics to be covered, is often dictated by the participants who complete surveys prior to the beginning of the program. The topics covered can range from “when to refuse advertising” to “handling complaints from readers.” All of these topics may be important, but they do not provide the participant a sufficient understanding of leadership.

Many of these seminars do not distinguish between management and leadership, processes that most leadership experts agree have two different functions. Northouse (2001) states “the overriding function of management is to provide order and consistency to organizations, whereas the primary function of leadership is to produce change and movement” (p. 8). Many current leadership seminars deal primarily with management issues such as managing budgets, staffing, problem solving, and time management. During the American Society of Newspaper Editors’ Leadership Conference in 2000 Burkett (2001) reported Conger explaining, “Managing deals with immediate demands, whereas leadership has to do with envisioning and story telling” (p. 10). Current leadership seminars and workshops for college newspaper editors claim to offer leadership training, but these programs frequently fail to address leadership functions and there is no evidence these programs are adequate to meet even the most basic leadership training needs of college editors. These inadequacies can only be addressed by first identifying characteristics of successful college newsroom leaders. To date, there is little published research concerning the competencies, skills, and behaviors student journalists say are necessary to effectively lead a student newspaper staff. WAUPM surveyed college advisers and general managers to identify the type of leadership training needed by college editors. The unpublished results were lost in a flood and the survey was not repeated (Larry Stewart, personal communication, June 26, 2002). While

information from advisers is extremely beneficial, no curriculum or training based on the attributes critical to effective student leadership can be fully informed solely on advisers' observations and experiences. Students should also have the benefit of research to inform them of what previous editors identified as essential to their effective newsroom leadership.

There is also no research to identify leadership skills that may be unique to the college newsroom position, compared to those of a professional newsroom leader or leaders of other organizations. As demonstrated by Kouzes and Posner (1995) and Peters (2001), the best way to determine these traits and identify the leadership training needs is to discuss these topics with experienced leaders, in this case, college newspaper editors. This is supported by Brandon (2002) who states that a “good place to start might be discussing the importance of the campus newspaper experience with the student managers and the student staff of campus newspapers” (p. 9).

Probably the most comprehensive study to address the training and development of college newsroom editors was conducted by Harvey (2002) at Pennsylvania State University. Harvey included student journalists, staff professionals, journalism professors, and an editor of a mid-sized daily newspaper. The goal was to develop curriculum for use in a peer-development program to train new or inexperienced editors to become “better leaders, managers, teachers, and mentors” (p. 7).

The author offers the Peer Editor Development Program as an educational model that can serve as a framework for journalism educators to develop a curriculum that best addresses their own unique situations. This research offers a scholarly approach to addressing some of the issues faced by college newsroom leaders. However, the study fails to distinguish between management and leadership, treating the two concepts as one function. For example, participants were asked to list three key management skills needed to be an effective newsroom manager, but no specific questions were asked of participants regarding leadership skills, competencies, and behaviors. Although students were not asked to list key leadership skills, some key leadership skills were identified in their responses, including communication, teaching, and mentoring. While they understand these skills to be important, it is not clear whether they confuse them with

management skills. The ability to distinguish between management and leadership is important because today's leaders must have certain leadership-specific attributes to be effective (Kotter, 1990). Although Harvey's model may work for management training at large dailies with a large professional support staff, he acknowledges this curriculum is unlikely to be applicable to management training at smaller newspapers. Harvey's study will, none-the-less, be very beneficial in helping to focus on the need for a more scholarly approach to curriculum development in addressing the training needs of college newsroom editors.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) describe leadership as an understandable universal process consisting of a set of skills. "And any skill can be strengthened, honed, and enhanced if we have the proper motivation and desire, along with practice, and feedback, role models and coaching" (p. 323).

Once critical leadership characteristics are identified, Harris and DeSimone (1994) state, "There are many empirical research studies that offer evidence showing leadership training can improve a leader's effectiveness" (p. 396). Many studies and approaches to leadership training are theory based, and offer systematic approaches to training and development and can offer evidence of their effectiveness. With the proper training and development, most leadership experts believe the majority of followers can be transformed into good leaders. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) acknowledge:

Becoming a leader is not easy, just as becoming a doctor or a poet is not easy, and anyone who claims otherwise is fooling himself. But learning to lead is a lot easier than most of us think it is, because each of us possesses the capacity for leadership. (p. 7)

Students preparing to accept top leadership roles at college or university newspapers should have the benefit of research showing what experienced student editors identify as the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors needed for that role and the training needs they indicate would help them develop those skills. Finally, leadership courses, seminars, and workshops designed to enhance critical leadership skills of student leaders should be informed by research.



### **Statement of the Problem**

Conger (1999) states it is more important now than ever to continue the investigation of leadership because twenty-first century challenges will require more of leaders in every organization. Kouzes and Posner (1995) have identified characteristics considered most valued in business and government leaders. While Kouzes and Posner assert these characteristics are applicable to leaders across all industries and disciplines, Heilbrunn (1996) argues this broad view does not necessarily address the most critical leadership characteristics of some leaders because it neglects to consider the various arenas in which leaders operate.

Student journalists, as well as professional journalists, say there is a need for better newsroom leadership to help them meet the challenges facing their respective publications (Harvey, 2002; Peters 2001; Brandon, 2002). Peters (2001) conducted the most definitive study to date that examines what professional journalists say characterizes successful professional newsroom leaders. Peters states, "There is value in knowing if there is widespread agreement about the most revered traits" (p. 39). Professional journalists are embracing the concept that once critical characteristics are identified for strong newsroom leadership, those qualities can be developed and strategies can be devised to overcome perceived shortfalls (Buckner, 2001; Peters, 2001). There is, however, little research concerning the leadership characteristics (competencies, skills, and behaviors) and leadership development experienced student editors say is needed to successfully execute the role of a top newsroom editor or editor in chief.

Although certain key characteristics of effective leadership have been identified for editors in the professional newsroom, a study of the key leadership characteristics of effective leaders in college newsrooms has not been done. It is generally assumed that the leadership skills for college editors will mirror those needed by professional journalists. Student leadership workshops and seminars are based on leadership needs identified by professional newspaper journalists, on surveys of college newspaper advisers, and surveys of students done before they assume the editor in chief leadership role. There are no surveys of student editors after they have served in that role. Therefore

the characteristics of leadership they relied upon or found most useful to their success in that role are unknown. There are no published data identifying how college editors developed their leadership skills or the leadership training or strategies they need to overcome shortfalls.

In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership characteristics and the training needs of college newspaper editors, it is important to gain input and perspective from current or recent college students who are serving or who have served in the role of editor in chief. This will help determine if there is widespread agreement about the leadership characteristics they identify as the most significant to their success in the role of editor in chief. It will also identify the leadership skills they think are needed that are unique to the college newsroom arena, or confirm that their leadership characteristics and training needs are the same or similar to those of professional journalists.

Identifying the most critical leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors specific to college newsroom leadership roles will help ensure the best leadership experience possible for the student journalist. Identifying these skills, as well as significant similarities and differences in student and professional newsroom leaders, will help provide a baseline for entry-level journalists for leadership positions in both college and professional newsrooms.

Confirming and developing those unique skills may have a profound effect on the student's overall view of leadership and ultimately their desire to remain in the field or accept a leadership role when they reach the professional level.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the study is to identify leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs experienced college newspaper leaders identify as most critical to their success in the college newsroom.

This information base can then be used to inform incoming editors in chief and managing editors (those with the greatest leadership responsibilities) of the characteristics deemed most valuable by their experienced peers. It can also be used by decision-makers who design leadership curriculum for courses, workshops, and seminars, to better address the most critical needs of college newspaper editors.

Identifying these competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs will also allow them to be compared to those of all leaders (Kouzes and Posner, 1995) and to professional newsroom leaders (Peters, 2001). Comparison of the significant similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of student and professional newsroom leaders will promote a greater understanding of the leadership training needs of new leaders in both college and professional newsrooms.

Confirming and developing the leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs experienced college newsroom leaders identify as most critical to their success, especially those unique to the student newsroom, may have a profound effect on the student's overall view of leadership. It could ultimately impact their desire to remain in the field or accept a leadership role when they reach the professional level.

### **Research Questions**

To accomplish the purpose of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the most significant competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced student editors identify as necessary to be successful in the role of editor in chief?
2. How do the leadership competencies identified by the expert panelists as necessary for success in the student newsroom culture compare to those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders?
3. What recommendations do these editors have for the leadership development and training of future editors?

### **Operational Definitions**

Adviser: The faculty or staff at a college or university whose job it is to provide the student newspaper staff with advice, recommendations, and guidance.

Behavior: Manner of conducting oneself; action and response to stimulation; response to environment.

Competency: Qualified; having requisite or adequate ability; having the capacity to function or develop in a particular way; sufficient.

Delphi panelist: Murry & Hammons (1995) identify the expert panelist as an individual with more knowledge about the subject matter than most people, or who possess certain work experience (p. 428). Delphi panelists for this study will be experienced college editors in chief.

Editor in chief: The person who serves in the top leadership role and has the ultimate responsibility of leading the staff in the daily execution of responsibilities associated with planning, organizing, motivating, and communicating the goals and objectives of producing the student newspaper.

Skill: A learned power; dexterity.

Top newsroom leader (Top Newspaper Leader): For the purposes of this study, editor in chief and managing editor are also referred to as top newsroom leader when they are

referring to the person who has the ultimate responsibility of leading the staff. In some large daily college newspapers, the managing editor, not the editor in chief, has those responsibilities.

### **Significance of Study**

Thousands of student journalists use the campus newspaper to hone their journalism skills. Many go on to top leadership positions within the college newsroom. Most of them have little or no leadership training and are ill informed about the most critical characteristics that will impact their performance. Most of these students are socialized leaders, relying on trial and error approaches as well as the leadership approaches of those they served under. Identifying the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced student editors deem critical to the editor in chief role will expand and inform the body of knowledge. This information base can then be used to inform incoming editors in chief and managing editors (those with the greatest leadership responsibilities) of the characteristics deemed most valuable by their experienced peers. The results will assist decision-makers to better address the most critical needs of college newspaper editors when designing leadership curriculum for courses, workshops, and seminars.

There are more than 1,800 student-led college newspapers across the country. Therefore, there are at least that many top leadership positions available annually because student editors typically serve only one year or one semester as editor in chief. This turnover in top leadership is significant and most probably unparalleled in any other organizational setting. The effects on leadership are compounded by a corresponding high annual turnover with other staff positions. Many of these newspaper staffs essentially re-invent themselves each year.

Nelson (1988) states that college newspapers are viewed as more than a tool for teaching writing, reporting, and editing (Nelson, 1988, as cited in Brandon, 2002). According to Brandon (2002), college newspapers offer an opportunity to teach sales, management, budgeting, advertising, design, public relations, and law. However, Brandon (2002) indicates more needs to be done regarding the quality of the learning

environment at the campus newspaper. The author states a “good place to start might be discussing the importance of the campus newspaper experience with student managers and the student staff of campus newspapers.”

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to college journalists who have served in the position of editor in chief or managing editor for no less than three months and have been out of that role for no more than one year. This study does not seek input from student newspaper staff members who have not served in either of these top newsroom leadership positions. This study does not seek advisers’ input concerning what characteristics they deem to be the most helpful to a student’s successful execution of that leadership position.

This study is limited to competencies, skills, and behaviors specific to leadership.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of relevant leadership research, especially as it pertains to the identification of leadership characteristics. While the focus of this study is on the competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs critical to college newsroom leaders, this review includes research that identifies key leadership competencies and training needs critical for all contemporary leaders as well as for professional newsroom leaders. This is necessary because most of the current body of knowledge specific to student newsroom leadership is not informed by scholarly research.

In order to understand many of the issues surrounding the identification of competencies, skills, and behaviors critical for effective student newsroom leadership and training, it is necessary to review literature at three specific levels: the state of leadership in contemporary organizations, leadership in the professional newsroom, and leadership in the college newsroom.

This review includes a definition of leadership, the necessity for distinguishing between management and leadership skills, the status of leadership models, and the leadership attributes and traits of successful leaders across all organizations. It will also discuss contemporary experts' ideas and concepts of leadership training.

The review concludes with the status of college newsroom leadership training. While the increase in the number of seminars and workshops demonstrates the growing need to address leadership training, the designs and approaches to the curriculum are unfocused and not supported by scholarly research.

#### **Definition of Leadership**

Northouse (2001) explains there is no agreed upon definition of leadership. As evidence, he offers the more than 65 classification systems developed over the past 50 years that attempt to define the dimensions of leadership. Northouse states that

leadership has traditionally been hard for people to define because the word can have different meanings for different people. Northouse maintains that in spite of the numerous ways leadership has been conceptualized, there are several characteristics that are common to all leadership. Northouse offers this definition: “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Sayles (1993) includes Northouse’s critical components of process, influence, group context, and goal attainment, in his more complex definition:

Leadership is primarily viewed as a vitally important skill to obtain commitment and motivation and to energize people to accept the worthwhileness of a new strategy or other major change. But in organizations with highly interdependent and dynamic parts, all of which are in flux, accomplishment takes more than commitment. It is not that commitment is unimportant; rather it is dependent on all the leader’s ability to build a system worth committing to. (p. 227)

Bass (1990) emphasizes that it is senseless to search for the one true and proper definition of leadership because the choice of a definition should depend on the methodological and substantive aspects of leadership in which one is interested (p. 18). None-the-less, the characteristics common to all leaders provide a starting point for those engaged in developing a definition that is specific to their unique arenas. New definitions of leadership will be useful in helping to shed light on the complexities associated with twenty-first century leadership especially since they are emerging at a time when the workforce and industry are facing enormous challenges associated with an increasingly diverse workforce, a faster pace of environmental and technological change, and greater global competition (Conger 1999, p. 238).

### **Leadership in a Contemporary Society**

Experts tell us that superior leadership will be a deciding factor in the success of organizations in the twenty-first century. Yet Bennis & Goldsmith (1997) describe the current status of leadership as a “crisis” that is “pernicious and all pervasive.” These authors state that “precisely at the time when trust and credibility of our alleged leaders are at an all-time low and when potential leaders feel most inhibited in exercising their



gifts, America most needs leaders—because, of course, as the quantity of leaders declines, the quantity of problems escalates” (p. 44). Conger (1999) says that the shortage of skilled leadership is the reason many organizations are having difficulty adapting to a world of intense global competition” (p. 1). Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state that “given the nature and constancy of change and the challenges we face, the key to making the right choices will come from understanding and embodying the leadership qualities necessary to succeed in an increasingly volatile and mercurial environment” (p. 4). Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) also state:

The stakes for the leaders of our future are rising rapidly and daily. The demands on the role in both the public and private sector...and the increased complexity of the world with globalization and galloping technology make leadership infinitely more difficult. (p. 1)

Knowledge of effective leadership is critical to the success of individuals and their followers. Barge (1994) states that the most successful leaders will be highly adaptive, innovative, and flexible (p. 24). Leaders will need to be competent strategists capable of providing a vision to effectively elicit the help of others in creating a firm’s competitive advantage (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, 2001, p. 37). Drucker (2002) explains that we are in a “knowledge revolution” that relies on intellectual capital. Therefore, successful leaders must change their mindsets from one “in which capital is the key resource and the financier is the boss” to one in which “knowledge workers see themselves as equal to those who retain their services, as professionals rather than employees” (p. 254). Drucker describes the knowledge society as one of seniors and juniors rather than of bosses and subordinates. The principle way for leaders to build strong relationships, and in turn, gain a competitive advantage, is to look for the potential in people and to spend time developing that potential.

The challenge of becoming an effective leader in the twenty-first century workplace may sound daunting, however, there is an abundance of research, as well as practical, theory-based models, that can make the ascent from novice leader to expert an informed and successful journey. Because leadership is highly valued and because many experts believe it can be learned, corporations spend billions of dollars annually on

leadership development courses (Bennis, 1994). More and more businesses are investing in leadership training for both new and existing leaders. Conger (1999) states that the need for more and better leaders has forced corporations to “invest an unprecedented amount of time and money in leadership development” (p. 1).

In order to help new and seasoned leaders meet today’s leadership challenges, Conger (1999) states that “it is imperative that we take a hard look at the competencies that will be needed by our future leaders and our current methods of training them. It is critical that we do so now because to the extent that our current leadership models are based on the requirements of previous decades, we put our leaders—and our organizations as a whole—at a great disadvantage in the years to come” (p. 239).

Conger (1992) states that not only can leadership be taught but that everyone has the capacity for leadership. Kouzes and Posner (1995) describe leadership as an understandable universal process consisting of a set of skills. “And any skill can be strengthened, honed, and enhanced if we have the proper motivation and desire, along with practice, and feedback, role models and coaching” (p. 323). This emphasis on leadership and leadership training has now become widespread across most industries. Even organizations with well-entrenched cultures, such as the newspaper industry, that have traditionally dismissed leadership research and training as inapplicable to what they view as their unique environment, or arena, are now actively involved in identifying and developing leadership skills.

To meet the demands for such leaders, Conger (1999) states that, “our approach to developing leaders will have to change” (p. 238). Fortunately, for new leaders, the idea of “socialized” leadership that is informed only by “trial and error” experience is no longer considered an acceptable way to train leaders in many organizations. Conger (1992) also states that most leadership researchers believe that the ability to lead is not uncommon. He states that the shortage of effective leaders is “a reflection of neglected development rather than a dearth of abilities” (p. 29).

Conger (1992) states that most leadership researchers think the origins of leadership go beyond genetic makeup and family to include other origins such as work, experiences, hardship, opportunity, education, role models, and mentors. Peter F.

Drucker, considered the father of modern management, states in *The Leader of the Future* (1996) that in the 50 years he has worked with organizations the effective leaders he has encountered knew four things:

1. The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers. Some people are thinkers. Some people are prophets. Both roles are important and badly needed. But without followers, there can be no leaders.
2. An effective leader is not someone who is loved or admired. He or she is someone whose followers do the right things. Popularity is not leadership. Results are.
3. Leaders are highly visible. They therefore set examples.
4. Leadership is not rank, privileges, titles, or money. It is responsibility. (p. xii)

Hesselbein, Goldsmith and Beckhard (1996) state that it is difficult to manage a group of people “where authority has to be earned.” They say those who do it successfully have three necessary attributes: a belief in oneself, a passion for the job, and a love of people (p. 8). Bennis and Goldsmith (1994) identified the following as 11 essential qualities of leadership:

1. Knowing yourself through reflection and observation
2. Understanding your history and your environment
3. Clarifying your values and your goals
4. Knowing and applying your learning style
5. Being willing to be a lifelong learner
6. Taking risks and being open to change
7. Accepting mistakes and failure as a necessity to creativity and problem solving
8. Creating a vision and seeing yourself and your life as part of it
9. Communicating your vision with meaning so that others are inspired by it
10. Maintaining trust through empathy, constancy, and integrity
11. Translating intention into reality through committed action. (p. 144)

Kouzes and Posner (1993) stress that becoming self-aware through a process of self assessment and reflection is the first key step a leader must take to realize his or her

full potential. Bennis (1989) agrees and states that “until you know your strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word” (p. 40).

A number of instruments are available to help people identify their strengths. The StrengthsFinder Profile, designed by Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., is based on a Gallup study of over two million people. Internet-based StrengthsFinder Profile, the product of a 25-year, multimillion dollar effort to identify the most prevalent human strengths can be accessed through a unique identification code found on the inside cover of the book *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). The code allows a person to take the StrengthsFinder test on-line. The instrument is designed to identify a person’s “five most powerful signature themes” or strengths, help them understand how they can use those strengths to become better leaders, and how the recognition and development of each member’s strengths can benefit the organization.

Conger (1999) tells us that strong leadership is viewed as one of the most important keys to organizational growth, change, and renewal (p. 1). Harris (1994) concurs with Conger that there is widespread belief that leadership skills are essential to effective management. Bennis (1997) states that “a new generation of strong leadership will be essential for American business, education, medicine, social welfare, and government, to meet the challenges of the twenty first century” (p. 4). Conger (1999) agrees with Bennis and says that many current leaders who were “schooled on the calmer waters of a more stable past...have come to realize that their existing leadership skills may be insufficient to meet the demands of the hypercompetitive, rapidly-changing business environment of the twenty-first century” (p. 145).

### **Leadership Training for Contemporary Leaders**

According to Kouzes and Posner (1997) “formal leadership training and education can be of greater importance in developing (leadership) skills” than experience or learning from other people (p. 332). The authors say leadership training does not have to involve hours spent in a formal classroom setting or in extended workshops.

A group of you might teach yourselves: have everyone read a magazine article or book (chapter by chapter); then hold a brown-bag discussion at lunch time of how the ideas might be used or adapted or modified in your department, workgroup, or function. (p. 333)

According to Harris and DeSimone (1994) the subject of leadership development and how best to train managers to be leaders has been one of the most heavily researched and popularly discussed topics of management (p. 396). There are shelves of books in libraries and bookstores to help managers learn to become effective leaders. However, Harris and DeSimone state that “one of the problems with advice in the popular press on leadership is that it is usually anecdotal, lacks a sound theoretical basis, and is often contradictory” (p. 396).

There are, however, many scholarly studies of leadership. Harris and DeSimone (1994) state that “many of the empirical research studies offer evidence that leadership training can improve a leader’s effectiveness” (p. 396). Bass (1990) emphasize that “methodology has become more sophisticated, and that more field and longitudinal studies have appeared, along with many helpful meta-analyses to help identify trends” (p. xi). Many studies and approaches to leadership training are theory based and offer systematic approaches to training and development and can offer evidence of their effectiveness. With the proper training and development, most leadership experts believe that the majority of followers can be transformed into good leaders. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) acknowledge:

Becoming a leader is not easy, just as becoming a doctor or a poet is not easy, and anyone who claims otherwise is fooling himself. But learning to lead is a lot easier than most of us think it is, because each of us possesses the capacity for leadership. (p.7)

Bass (1990) reported that a number of studies have shown that direct training in the techniques of leadership can improve leaders’ effectiveness and states that “Maier (1953) demonstrated that discussion groups with skilled leaders produced better decisions than those with unskilled leaders” (p. 839). He found that trained leaders had more success than untrained leaders in inducing their groups to accept change and

compromise. Bass also states that Maier and Hoffman (1960) demonstrated that groups with trained leaders produced higher quality discussions than groups with untrained leaders.

In the past several years there have been several textbooks that explain the different approaches to leadership and illustrate by example the different models and theories that have been used to help study the body of knowledge concerning leadership development. Northouse (2001) analyzes a selected number of leadership theories, illustrates how each approach can be used in working world situations, presents research findings, case studies, and leadership instruments to measure personality characteristics and leadership styles.

### **Leadership Models**

Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) advise organizations to pursue leadership models or theories that will best develop the leadership strengths their managers will need to help them face challenges of today's business environment. Conger (1992) stresses that organizations cannot meet these leadership challenges using the leadership models most common in today's organizations. Two leadership models common in today's organizations are authoritarian and transactional. The transformational leadership model is becoming more popular as organizations struggle to meet demands of the twenty-first century workforce.

#### **Authoritarian Model**

The authoritarian model is exemplified in the newspaper industry by the "curmudgeon model" discussed in the introduction (Hart, 2000). According to Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) the authoritarian model is ill suited for modern organizations. They state, "Today many organizations are reconsidering the macho, control-and-command mentality that is intrinsic to that increasingly threadbare model" (p. 2). Burkett (2001) cites Conger as saying "In the old days the boss would rely on authority and formal management. Request it, and trust that those who hoped to move up would see that it got done" (p. 11). However, Conger stated future newsroom leaders will face a generation of new staff members who do not respond to authority and formal

management. Authority alone is insufficient for effective leadership. Miller (2001) states “You can order people to do something, but eventually coercion will erode confidence in your leadership” (p. 19).

### **Transactional Model**

Burns (1978) describes most leader-follower relations as transactional; an approach where one thing is exchanged for another. Northouse (2001) states that “the images associated with the transactional leader include that of task-master, negotiator, disciplinarian, and autocrat” (p. 176). According to Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) “transactional leadership refers to the interactions between individuals and groups in the performance of their jobs, but within particular contexts” (p. 7). Transactional leadership is focused on managerial control, formal authority mechanisms, production, and results. It can be described as a quid pro quo-type relationship. If you perform your designated tasks you will be rewarded, if you don't perform your tasks you will be disciplined. Conger (1992) argues that today's leaders must be more inspirational and collaborative which is contrary to the authoritarian models that de-emphasized communication with subordinates, were results-driven, and saw people as tools. At an American Society of Newspaper Editors conference on leadership, Conger told a group of editors that “Today, most young people have no experience with the military model. And they don't like to be told what to do.” (Burkett, 2001, p.11). A good example of the failure of the authoritarian approach is illustrated by Bennis (2003) in his description of Howell Raines, the former New York Times Executive Editor during the Jayson Blair plagiarism scandal. Bennis described Howell's leadership style as “a newsroom czar who controlled by fear” (p. 35). Bennis states that the true scandal is less about Blair's dishonesty and more about Raines' failure to lead his organization. Bennis states “...he was an ego-driven autocrat who ruled by fear, played favorites, had an idiosyncratic news judgement ... and loathed hearing unwanted truths” (p. 34). Raines, according to Bennis, failed to create a culture that fostered truth. Bennis emphasizes that superior organizational cultures are those “where employees know they can deliver bad news and their bosses will listen even if they don't like what they are hearing” (p. 35).

### **Transformational Model**

In response to increased demands on leaders to develop an approach that is better suited to the challenges of the twenty-first century workforce, transformational leadership has become an increasingly popular paradigm. Many organizations today are “looking to leadership that is empowering, that invites participation, that is flexible and responsive to the realities of life” (Bennis and Goldsmith, 2001, p. 2).

Barge (1994) reports that in recent years transformational leadership theory has gained popularity because it emphasizes the importance of rhetorical skills in motivating and inspiring employees. Kotter (1990) explains transformational leadership as “responding intuitively to change and opportunity, inspiring others to comprehend and rally around the renewed vision of possibilities” (p.5).

Transformational leaders create a vision for the future, and as a result, they must spend time communicating that vision to employees or followers. Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) state “Successful transformative leaders ... powerfully project their vision, gain support for that vision, [and] are consistent, persistent and focused in order to maintain momentum and empower others to take responsibility and become part of that movement” (p.5).

Burns (1978) leadership study provided a comprehensive theory that distinguished transformational from transactional leadership. His theories are explained in his highly respected and widely read book, *Leadership*, which Heilbrunn (1996) describes as “the Rosetto Stone of recent leadership studies.” In fact, Heilbrunn (1996) states that Burns’s most important insight was to draw a distinction between these two approaches. “Whereas transactional leadership is merely a version of managerialism that appeals to the economic self-interest of followers, transformational leadership alters the expectations of followers” (p. 7). According to Heilbrunn (1996), Burns asserted that leaders are capable of elevating their followers to new levels of virtue and integrity. “Moral leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations and values of followers” (p. 7).



Heilbrunn (1996) credits Bennis with being the most successful promoter of the transformational model and says he “deserves credit for linking leadership theory to the challenge of global competitiveness” (p. 8).

There are several models of transformational leadership, which help define the theory. However, Anderson (1998) points out that it is important to remember when embracing or adopting any model that “transforming leadership is not a rigid, linear, step-by-step process, even though a series of steps can be outlined to assist in understanding how the process can work” (p. 55). Three popular models include the “Four Strategies Model,” (Bennis and Nanus, 1997); “Three-act Process Model,” (Tichy and DeVanna, 1990); and the “Full Range of Leadership Model” (Bass and Avolio, 1994). The “Full Range of Leadership Model” includes the transformational 4-I’s: idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration (Northouse 2001, p.136).

Many researchers maintain that one of the most important tools in helping to promote the transformational theory is love. Anderson (1998), Kouzes & Posner (1997), and Bolman and Deal (1994), all agree that love is an essential component of successful leadership. In fact, Kouzes and Posner state:

We suspect that the best kept secret of successful leaders is love: being in love with learning, with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce, and with those who honor the organization by using its work.

Leadership is an affair of the heart, not of the head. (p.185)

Bolman and Deal (1994) assert that if you show people you care they will, in turn, care about you. “When you give love, you get it back...When people know that someone really cares, you can see it in their faces. And in their actions. Love really is the gift that keeps on giving. (Bolman, p. 84)

Kouzes and Posner (1995) state, “When leaders encourage others, through recognition and celebration, they inspire them with courage—with heart. When we encourage others, we give them heart. And when we give heart to others, we give love” (p. 305).

Barge (1994) states that “A staff member's need to be loved and to be a part of the group is what Maslow calls the need for affiliation—a need that all human beings are motivated to fulfill” (p. 153). The need to be loved and to be part of a group is not a new concept. However, most managers do not think of love as a tool to improve their relationships with employees or their ability to lead.

Bolman and Deal (1994) believe that modern leaders need a “spirituality” in order to “lead with soul.” They state that love, along with authorship, power, and significance, is one of the four gifts a leader shares with followers. These authors addressed the plight of the modern leader in, *Leading with Soul*. They say the modern manager is the victim of a paradigm that dictates that a manager focus on reason and progress (p. 5). “As consultants and researchers we have repeatedly found that managers’ first response is to focus on the rational and technical features of any situation.”(p. 39). This ultimately leads to “personal anguish and social disarray” (p.5). “The signs point toward spirit and soul as the essence of leadership. There is growing consensus that we need a new paradigm to move beyond the traps of conventional thinking. In truth, we may need to rediscover and renew an old paradigm” (p. 39). To explain the need for the modern-day leader to return to spirituality to help solve problems and therefore to restore balance, they use a modern-day fable that is “organized around conversations between a beleaguered leader and a wise sage.” The wise sage uses centuries-old moral lessons from spiritual leaders of all faiths to emphasize and explain the need for the modern-day leader to return to spirituality to help solve problems. The authors say that “soul and spirit are necessary for today’s managers to become tomorrow’s leaders.” They explain that “leading with soul requires giving gifts from the heart that breathe spirit and passion into your life and organization” (p. 12). This, they say, is accomplished by giving four gifts of leadership: love, authorship, power, and significance. “They emerge from two basic dualities; yin and yang, matter and spirit...opposites that make each other possible” (p. 68). Love is essential because all people need to know that they are cared about. “A big part of love is caring enough to find out what really matters to others” (p. 85).

Irwin Federman, the CEO of Monolithic Memories, a successful high-tech Silicon Valley company, is cited in Bennis and Nanus (1985) as stating:

If you think about it, people love others not for who they are, but for how they make others feel. We willingly follow others for much the same reason. It makes us feel good to do so. Now, we also follow platoon sergeants, self-centered geniuses, demanding spouses, bosses of various persuasions and others, for a variety of reasons. But none of these reasons involves the person's leadership qualities. In order to willingly accept the direction of another individual, it must feel good to do so. This business of making another person feel good in the unspectacular course of his daily comings and goings is, in my opinion, the very essence of leadership. (p. 59)

There is evidence that newspaper employees in non-leadership positions want leaders who demonstrate a transformational leadership style. The American Society of Newspaper Editors (2001) commissioned a survey of 1,151 journalists from 21 newspapers concerning the effectiveness in 20 areas of leadership. The quality employees rated No.1 was "celebrating newspaper victories." The top 20 also included:

1. Defining the newspaper's priorities
2. Setting high standards
3. Communicating the paper's values to community
4. Giving regular recognition when deserved
5. Communicating expectations
6. Facilitating employees growth/advancement
7. Creating an atmosphere of mutual trust/respect
8. Encouraging appropriate risk-taking
9. Providing training to address staff deficiencies
10. Keeping abreast of employees concerns. (Peters, 2001, p. 38)

By definition, 11 of the top 20 qualities are characteristics of transformational leadership.

Clearly, newspaper staffs want engaged leaders who set high standards, provide a vision and a sense of mission, communicate high expectations, encourage new approaches, and are responsive to employees' individual needs.

Bass (1990) describes a study done by Crookall (1987) that compared the transactional and transformational leadership training of shop instructors of the Canadian

Correctional Service. Sixty instructors participated in the study. They were equally divided into three groups. Group One completed 3-days of training based on the Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership model. Group Two received 3 days of education about transformational leadership. Group Three served as the control group. Both trained groups showed significant improvement in work habits and productivity as rated by inmates. However, only the transformational program significantly improved the inmates' citizenship behavior and respect for the supervisors. Transformational leadership education resulted in dramatic changes in some of the instructors. Bass (1990) states that these results suggest that transformational leadership training is not a substitute for transactional or situational training but should be used to augment this training.

### **Distinguishing Between Management and Leadership**

Organizations need both management and leadership. However, experts predict the skills specific to leadership will determine the success of twenty-first century leaders. Management responsibilities are, none-the-less, a large part of most leaders' job descriptions. Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) state that management and leadership represent an "uneasy" fit. They describe this uneasy fit as "the greatest paradox of all" because leading is "pushing for great change" while management is designed to "keep the organization ticking over time" (p. 5).

Covey (1996) states that because both management and leadership are vital functions, it is critical to understand how they are different so their roles are not confused.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) explain the difference in managing and leading can be found in their root words. Managing comes from the root word "hand." Managing, they say, is about "handling things," about maintaining order, about organization and control, whereas leadership is about taking people to places they have never been (p. 36).

Kotter (1990) states that despite some similarities, leadership and management are very distinct in their primary functions. He explains that the function of management

is to provide order and consistency to organizations, while the primary function of leadership is to produce change and movement.

Many leadership experts use Kotter's (1990) comparison of management and leadership to help explain the differences (Northouse, 2001 and Conger, 1992). Kotter states that management is about budgeting and planning, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Leadership is about building a vision, aligning people, communicating, motivating, inspiring, and recognizing accomplishments. Northouse (2001) explains:

In planning and budgeting, the emphasis of management is on establishing detailed agendas, setting timetables from several months to a few years, and allocating the necessary resources to meet organizational objectives. In contrast to this, the emphasis of leadership is on direction setting, clarifying the big picture, building a vision, and setting strategy to create needed organizational changes. (p.8)

Rost (1991) defines leadership as a multidirectional influence relationship and management as a unidirectional authority relationship.

Conger (1992) states that while "most managers by now understand the distinction between managing and leading, thanks to a flood of seminars, books, and press coverage on the subject" he does not think awareness is enough (p. 189). Conger emphasizes the need for deep skill development. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) agree with Conger and also argue that "our culture consistently fails to support the growth and development of leadership" (p. 45). Conger states that this failure results because many organizations prefer managers to leaders, because leaders often take initiative, challenge the status quo, and encourage followings. Conger (1992) explains that "for many companies this is a frightening prospect. A five-day leadership program is a safe alternative ... without taking a deeper responsibility for its successful realization" (p. 190). Bennis and Goldsmith state that these attitudes can be a barrier to an individual's development as a leader.

For those who undertake the responsibility of leadership training workshops and seminars, and who truly want to develop strong leadership abilities for their participants,

it is critical that they understand the difference between management and leadership, know that there is an unconscious fear of developing leadership within our culture, and have a thorough understanding of the skill set essential for leadership.

### **Leadership Attributes Critical for All Leaders**

Research studies have identified certain attributes considered critical to all effective leaders. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that “leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they are doing their best. And this behavior varies little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, and country to country” (p. xxiii).

Kouzes and Posner interviewed several thousand business and government executives to discover the characteristics those executives valued in leaders. They used the results of these interviews to design an instrument that included 20 leadership characteristics. They administered the questionnaire to 20,000 people on four continents. In the initial survey, conducted in 1987, they “asked participants to select the seven qualities that they most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow” (p.20). The respondents identified the four top characteristics of leaders as “honest,” “forward-looking,” “inspiring,” and “competent.” The survey was repeated in 1995 and the results were the same. Kouzes and Posner reported, “Honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent: these characteristics have over the past two decades, been consistently selected by all respondents groups as the four most essential leadership prerequisites” (p. 26). This same instrument has been used by other organizations and leadership experts and has produced the same results (ASNE 2001, p.11). Burkett (2001) cites Conger in a meeting of journalists at a leadership conference in December 2000, that certain attributes are critical to all effective leaders. His observations were based on his years of experience as a research scientist and on a nationwide survey of 1,500 managers. “Honesty,” he reaffirmed, is still the top ranked attribute that people want in a leader. A second essential attribute he gave is “optimism.” No one, he stated, wants to follow a pessimistic leader. And finally, he said “trustworthiness” because people follow people they trust (ASNE 2001, p.11).

## **Honesty**

Honesty has been the most important characteristic named by leaders and followers in past surveys and will most likely become even more significant as people strive to rebuild trust in a corporate system that has, in some cases, made fools of stakeholders.

In spite of recent corporate scandals, honesty will continue to reign as one of the most essential characteristics for leaders in creating a corporate culture that encourages honesty. Bennis (2003) offers Howell Raines, the former New York Times Executive Editor, as a good example of a leader who failed to create an organizational culture that fostered truth. Bennis emphasizes that Raines' failure is no different than that of Ken Lay's failure at Enron where “Both failed to create cultures of candor—organizations where employees know they can deliver bad news and their bosses will listen even if they don't like what they are hearing” (p. 35).

Even before the Enron, Arthur Andersen, and WorldCom scandals, experts were warning that “at least some individuals from different groups—including top level executives and business students — may be willing to commit either illegal actions (e.g., fraud) or actions that many think are unethical” (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, 2001, p. 509).

Simons, Mintzberg, and Basu (June 2002), business school professors from Harvard, Oxford, and McGill universities, published a scathing indictment of business executives. They suggested that business school professors and CEOs have contributed to what they call a crisis that has the potential to destroy “the very thing we cherish”—capitalism. Recent business scandals, they emphasize, are “just the tip of the black iceberg.” The underlying problem, they state, is selfishness carried to an extreme causing the public's confidence in business to be damaged. They blame business leaders and academics and state that they need to rethink what they do and what they teach. The authors point to five principles they refer to as “half-truths” that are common to many business practices and philosophies. These half-truths are the root of corruption in current business culture, and include:

1. The extraordinary focus on personal gain by CEOs
2. The focus on shareholder value to the exclusion of other stakeholders
3. The misconceptions about heroic management
4. The downsizing trend
5. The misconception that “a rising tide lifts all boats. (p. 121)

Certainly there is strong evidence from the Enron indictments to justify the claims of Simons, Mintzberg, and Basu. Former Enron executive, Michael Kopper, pleaded guilty to defrauding Enron and its shareholders. Hedges (2002) reported in the Houston Chronicle that “Kopper admitted that he and another executive set up partnerships to make the company appear more profitable and secretly and unlawfully generate millions of dollars for themselves” (p. A1). According to Simons, Mintzberg, and Basu (2002), this concept of maximizing personal gain is exactly what business schools are teaching in our finance classes.

Economic Man, we tell our students, has one goal: more. And to get more, each of us is willing to do anything. In other words, there are no absolutes—not even integrity and self-respect. And today, perhaps more than ever, there are plenty of people—business leaders, financiers, consultants, athletes, professors—who are willing to sell their integrity for a price. (p. 118)

According to these experts, the first four practices or half-truths exemplify self-serving behavior justified by corporations who say, “a rising tide lifts all boats”—the fifth half-truth. These experts state:

What we are seeing is a rising disparity between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots. In 1999, at the height of a decade long economic boom, one in six American children was officially poor, and 26% of the workforce was subsisting on poverty wages. (p. 121)

In “Honesty is the Best Policy” Anders (2000) states that when he asked people to share stories about what makes their company special their favorite stories involved integrity—“the make or break importance of simply keeping your word” (p. 264). He said that in many companies, especially Internet start-up companies, the executives want “fast action, fast growth, and fast results.” Anders states that most people in the business



world are not willing to commit fraud, however, he emphasized many organizations or companies “are prepared to cut a few ethical corners in order to move faster” (p. 264).

Anders asserts some of the Web’s smartest people still believe that honesty is the best policy. He offers advice from a general partner at Onset Ventures, in Menlo Park, California:

If executives want “integrity” to be more than just a buzzword in a mission statement, they need to think hard about three issues: the growth goals they promise to customers and investors, the career opportunities that they promise to employees, and the tone that they strike in day-to-day negotiations with business partners. (p. 266)

Anders states, “If this were a Sunday-school lesson, the answer would be obvious. Virtue would triumph, and cheaters would be vanquished by truth tellers” (p. 264).

The assessment of current business practices by Simons, Mintzberg, and Basu, implies that we are in peril of losing the advantage we have enjoyed in “capitalism’s global triumph.” They emphasize that communism toppled because of too little private interest and question whether the same fate could befall capitalism by allowing too much private interest to go unchecked (p.118). In order to protect our capitalist system, they say CEOs need to adopt a new “agenda that restores faith in business, trust in business leaders, and hope in the future.” (p.121). Now more than ever, demonstrating honesty will be essential to leaders in regaining the trust of all stakeholders, including the workforce, consumers, and stockholders. Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (1995) agree that managing people you can’t see and cannot control in any detail can only work if there is mutual trust between the workers and leaders (p. 6). This is another example of why honesty is so vital to the long-range health of organizations and why leaders must establish credibility with employees to help build trust. Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, (2001) state that the challenge is even more daunting in a virtual workplace model because experts say there is a need for “strategic leaders to guard against unethical actions by setting an example ... building trust within companies requires vigilance so that an ethical culture becomes institutionalized” (p. 509).

### **Forward Looking and Inspiring**

Although honesty remains the most valued attribute of a leader, Kouzes and Posner (1995) report that the characteristics “forward-looking” and “inspiring” have increased in importance over time. They stress that “more people want their leaders to provide future direction and show enthusiasm than in past years” (p.26).

Conger (1999) believes the greatest impact will come from an increasingly diverse workforce, a faster pace of environmental and technological change, and greater global competition (p.238). Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2001) project that effective leaders will need to be competent strategists capable of providing a vision to effectively elicit the help of others in creating a firm’s competitive advantage (p. 37). This will be especially true of electronic commerce (e-commerce) where strategic management practices have had to be changed to help companies stay competitive. Andrew Grove, former Intel CEO, said that companies must continually make clear their vision as it changes. Grove says “continual change and quick strategic decisions are essential if a firm is to be successful in the new world of hypercompetition” (p. 3).

Conger and Benjamin (1999) state “that leaders will be under unrelenting pressure to out smart competitors in finding and keeping strategic advantage” (p. 241). Therefore, they will need “a keen strategic sense and a relentless desire to be non-stop learners” to ensure that they are competent to deal with significant change (p. 239). Day, Schoemaker, and Gunther (2000) state that emerging technologies are “creating and restructuring industries at an unprecedented rate, making traditional practices obsolete, and creating a need for new best practices, core competencies, and competitive strategies” (p. vi). Forward looking executives will have to employ external environmental analysis by continuously scanning, monitoring, forecasting, and assessing the increasingly turbulent, complex, and global conditions to increase their understanding of those environments and to identify opportunities (p. 52).

These visions and opportunities can only be realized if leaders are able to inspire workers to meet and exceed goals. Although recent history and current newspaper accounts suggest that characteristics and practices such as honesty, forward-looking, inspiring and competence have taken a backseat to corporate and personal greed, there

are corporations that follow these principles. Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, (2001) offer Nucor Corporation as an excellent example of inspired leadership. Nucor developed much of the mini-mill steel production technology. It is described as the “Southwest Airlines” of the steel industry: a simple, no-frills organization, with a unique culture, highly motivated workers, and the lowest cost structure of the industry.

A key strategy for Nucor was the integration of the latest technology to increase steel production and decrease man-hours. They do not develop their own technology, however, everyone is encouraged to experiment and try to improve or change their existing technologies. Nucor accomplishes this through a bonus system that rewards employees who increase efficiency and by encouraging employees to experiment. Operators are allowed to adjust machinery to improve performance without permission from management. They have established a high tolerance for failure to help promote innovation. The company has a highly structured bonus system that involves all workers. Bonuses allow Nucor employees to earn as much as their unionized counterparts. Nucor’s strategy is a good example of leaders and followers working together to accomplish a goal that is good for the employee, the customer, and the corporation. The leadership has shown the way by demonstrating honesty, a forward-looking strategy, inspiration, and competence.

Conger and Benjamin (1999) state that inspiring workers will be more challenging in the future because “projected changes in the nature of work, workers, and competition will result in new and different relationships between employers and employees” (p. 238). Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (1995) agree that future organizations will be very different, “much more like networks” causing companies to change the way they think about organizations (p. 3). These authors explain that many organizations are either becoming or will become dispersed or “virtual” work places. Day, Schoemaker, and Gunther (2000) explain the virtual workplace as “an organization in which employees, suppliers, and customers are geographically dispersed but united by technology” (p. 380). People no longer have to be in the same place to get work done. These authors warn that although this model “minimizes asset commitments, resulting in

greater flexibility, lower costs, and consequently, faster growth it creates “a new set of challenges, especially in the area of authority relations” (p. 381).

### **Competency**

While the leadership characteristics “honesty,” “forward-looking,” and “inspiring” are critical it is important to remember that a leader must also be “competent.” In many ways these four characteristics are interconnected. Conger and Benjamin (1999) state that the competencies demanded of twenty-first century leaders will differ from those of yesterday in both strategic and organizational capabilities (p. 239). Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (1995) state that “in the new organizations, titles and roles carry little weight until leaders prove their competence” (p.5). Kouzes and Posner (1995) explain that leadership competency is different from technical competency. They refer to leadership competency as “value-added competence which includes the abilities to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage” (p. 25). They acknowledge that a trend exists toward requiring more technical competence of leaders, however, they emphasize that functional competence alone is insufficient for leadership.

### **Significance of Top Leadership Attributes**

Experts tell us that the greatest challenge for the twenty-first century leader will be to understand the importance and the value of the top four leadership characteristics: honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent as vital to their personal welfare and the welfare of all stakeholders. They will need these characteristics to meet technological, diversity, and global challenges.

Anderson (1998) asserts that followers tend to admire leaders who follow the four top qualities identified by Kouzes and Posner (1987) and those that consistently implement the following 10 leadership practices:

1. Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve
2. Experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes
3. Envision an uplifting and ennobling future
4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams

5. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
6. Strengthen people by sharing information and power and increasing their discretion and visibility
7. Set the example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with your stated values
8. Plan small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment
9. Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project
10. Celebrate team accomplishments regularly. (p. 51)

People place a very high value on these leadership characteristics and research indicates that they will probably continue to be regarded as the most critical attributes of twenty-first century leaders. These characteristics will be essential for leaders who face the monumental challenges associated with regaining the trust of all stakeholders. They must be able to inspire a workforce that is diverse and dispersed and at the same time be forward-lookers capable of envisioning the future in the face of a rapidly changing and complex global economy and information revolution. They must also demonstrate the necessary competence in both leadership and business strategy to survive in a highly competitive marketplace.

Buckingham (August 2001) suggests that many CEOs do not understand or grasp fundamental leadership characteristics. He attributes this to what he describes as “an attitude problem.” He describes his mission as one that seeks “to create a better marriage between the dreams of workers and the drive of companies to win.” However, the major hindrance to that goal is that CEOs don’t understand what motivates their employees. There are five attitude adjustments that Buckingham states will help leaders become more effective:

1. Measure what really matters. Measure the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged workers. Measure where the work culture is strong and where it is weak
2. Stop trying to change people. When it comes to getting the best performance out of people, the most efficient route is to revel in their strengths, not focus on their weaknesses

3. You're not the most important person in the company, middle managers are. Research shows that the single most important determinant of individual performance is a person's relationship with his or her immediate manager
4. Stop looking to the outside for help. The solutions to your problems exist inside your company. The best leaders are relentless at seeking out, studying, and highlighting the lessons of their own performers. Learn from your own people first
5. Don't assume that everyone wants your job or that great people want to be promoted out of what they do best. Frontline talent has a prestige problem, and it's turning into a corporate-performance problem. The only way we have to reward excellence on the front line is to promote people out of the very roles that they do best. A major challenge for CEOs is to define excellence in every role and to award titles and prestige to those roles to help them become genuine career choices for employees. (p. 90-98)

Buckingham explains that these attitude changes can help leaders build the culture of their organization by engaging their employees at every level. Buckingham states "The beautiful thing about a culture that is built by focusing on individual strengths is that no one can steal it. And an advantage that's hard to steal is an advantage that lasts" (p. 98).

### **Leadership Attributes Critical for Professional Newsroom Leaders**

The need for stronger professional newsroom leadership has been the topic of increasing interest and research at the most respected journalism institutes, foundations, and schools in the nation. Buckner (2001) states that this increased interest is the result of significant issues the industry is facing such as rapid changes in technology, competition for talent, credibility gaps, budget shortfalls, and changes in readership; many of the same challenges faced by most industries. Johnson (2002) states that strong leadership is becoming more important because of "an economic downturn with layoffs and less space for news; concerns about keeping journalism independent of outside pressure; and Wall Street-driven attention to profit" (p. 10). Johnson emphasizes that

another key leadership role will be to create an environment that attracts and retains talented journalists. Wizda (2000) cites Miller, a newspaper consultant, that “without the skills to do their jobs well, editors can become disillusioned and disenfranchised—particularly the newest members of the desk” (p.35). Newsroom experts emphasize that one of the biggest complaints from newsroom personnel is the lack of skilled leadership from mid-level editors...the level where newspapers are losing the most people (Wizda, 2000).

The results of a recent nationwide study of professional newspaper journalists (ASNE, 2001) found that the quality of newsroom leadership needs to be stronger and identified the need for strong leadership and training as “critically important at this juncture in the newspaper industry” (Buckner, 2001, p. 5). This has increased awareness of the need for strong leadership and the need to identify the set of skills necessary for that strong leadership.

In an effort to help professional newsroom leaders meet these challenges, Rich Oppel, president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, created a leadership committee to focus on the state of newsroom leadership (Buckner, 2001, p. 5). This leadership committee worked to identify the ingredients of effective leadership. The results represent one of the most comprehensive studies on the state of American newsroom leadership and “offers insights from some of America’s top educators, researchers, and practitioners of leadership” (p. 5).

One study commissioned by ASNE and conducted by Peters (2001) identified the traits and characteristics of professional newsroom leaders and include what journalists in both supervisory and non-supervisory positions say are the “ideal” leadership traits of top editors (p.40). Peters surveyed 1,151 journalists in 21 newsrooms across the United States. Participant journalists answered questions about leadership strengths and weaknesses in their newsrooms and were asked to assess specific behaviors and performance of their supervisors and the newsroom’s top leadership. Peters states that “by recognizing pervasive leadership strengths and weaknesses, newspaper editors—and the industry as a whole—should be better able to capitalize on the perceived pluses and devise strategies to overcome the perceived shortfalls” (p. 34). The research concluded

that the quality of newsroom leadership needs to be stronger and the quality of leadership is one of the biggest dissatisfiers in newsrooms. Newsroom leadership “received the second lowest satisfaction ratings—right after newsroom morale—when employees at metropolitan and midsize papers stated their level of satisfaction with 15 workplace factors, including salary” (p. 35).

The study found that when respondents named top editors’ greatest failings, virtually all were interpersonal in nature. One of the biggest issues for newsroom personnel is the lack of feedback. Peters states that “the whole constellation of behaviors that are generally regarded as feedback—including constructive criticism and positive reinforcement—emerge as a key leadership deficit when newsroom employees assess not only their own supervisors but also their top leaders” (p. 34). Peters also found that editors get relatively low effectiveness ratings at metropolitan, midsize, and small papers for providing training, encouraging appropriate risk-taking, and encouraging open debate. The study showed that top editors are most effective in celebrating newspaper victories, seeking input from readers, and defining priorities.

Respondents were asked to rank order ideal traits of top editors from a list of 15 characteristics that included: sound judgement; hiring/promoting wisely; setting high standards; preparing for future challenges; balancing profit demands/news values; decisiveness; people oriented approach to policies; communicating mission/goals; ensuring fair, competitive salaries; accessible to all employees; collaborative workstyle; emphasizes constant staff learning; assumes role of teacher/coach; communicates news values outward; and delivers fair discipline. The study found that not only is there agreement between non-supervisors and supervisors regarding the relative importance of all 15 characteristics, if forced to choose only three, there is widespread agreement that the three most important would be “sound judgment,” “hiring and promoting wisely,” and “setting high standards” (p. 40).

Participants were asked to select the most significant shortfalls of top editors from a list of 13. The list included: out of touch with problems, issues, and concerns of employees; too little communication with staff; unrealistic expectations, given existing resources; no vision, goals, or priorities; set standards too low; poor hiring choices;



inadequate contact with the community; too controlling of middle managers; insufficient guidance of middle managers; authoritarian approach to decision-making; indecisive; insufficient feedback; and ineffective dealings with other newspaper departments.

Employees at all size papers chose “out of touch with staff concerns,” “too little communication with the staff,” and “insufficient feedback.” Other significant shortfalls listed were “poor hiring and promoting,” and “unrealistic expectations.” Respondents from midsize papers rated “authoritarian decision-making” as a key failure. However, the study states:

What is most significant from the patterns expressed is that newsroom personnel say they care most about traits in top leadership that ensure product quality and integrity...still, when they named top editors greatest failings elsewhere in the study, virtually all were interpersonal in nature. (p.40)

Peters acknowledges that the perfect leader probably does not exist, adding that each individual’s vision of ideal is strongly influenced by personal preference, background, and circumstances. In spite of this, Peters maintains:

There is value in knowing if there is widespread agreement about the most revered traits, for the absence of one of these traits would be likely to generate more group consternation than the absence of any other trait less widely regarded as critical. And it is important to know if top leadership has different notions of the ideals than those below them. (p.39)

Geisler (2000), a leadership and management group leader at Poynter Institute for Media Studies specializes in teaching managers the keys to building strong newsroom cultures and systems, including how to build leadership credibility. She states that “certain competencies, skills and behaviors are the hallmarks of top managers, even though their styles and personalities may be vastly different” (p.12). She offers the following “Threshold Test,” a series of 10 questions managers can administer to employees to test the strength of the manager’s leadership:

1. *Have I shared the big picture and painted you into it?* Geisler states that leaders need to present a clear and compelling vision to their followers.

2. *Have I clearly defined what is expected of you?* Geisler states this involves not only a clear description of duties specific to that job, but also the kinds of outcomes these duties should produce.
3. *Have I given you frequent, specific praise?* Geisler states that research shows that top performing employees thrive on meaningful and continuous feedback.
4. *Have I held everyone accountable for quality?* Geisler states that high performing employees want to know that all members of their team are giving their best.
5. *Have I set a tone of optimism?* Geisler states that although leaders have a variety of styles, the strongest among them set a tone that is pervasively positive.
6. *Have I set a tone of creativity?* Geisler states that high performance employees aren't satisfied with carrying out assigned tasks successfully; they want to be the birth parent of new ideas. Leaders must support employees even when their innovations fail.
7. *Have I set a tone of integrity?* Geisler states that employees must see in the leaders actions that he or she has strong ethical standards, both personal and journalistic.
8. *Do I listen?* Geisler states that effective leaders must master the art of "deep" or "active" listening. And she states that good listeners must learn to listen with empathy.
9. *Have I provided the tools you need?* Geisler states that this does not mean providing state-of-the-art equipment. Rather she states that it means being empathetic about the tools your employees say they need. This is especially true for areas where leaders are unfamiliar with the technology needed for certain tasks.
10. *Have I encouraged and modeled the value of learning?* Geisler states that training can be a valuable perk for high performance employees. She states that your best are often eager for intellectual challenge. However, that same

principle applies to leaders who should show employees that they too have a lot to learn and a desire to do so. (p. 12-13)

Miller (2001), who is also affiliated with Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and serves as a leadership development coach to news organizations, states that authority alone is insufficient to persuade others to act. In order to persuade others, leaders must “master the art of persuasion.” He offers three suggestions for gaining the influence necessary to persuade followers or even those over which the leader may have no direct authority, such as peers and bosses, to follow their lead by first finding a common goal. Miller states that even a “difficult or unpleasant task is more palatable if it’s driven by shared values and objectives.” Next, they must maintain credibility. Miller states that “trust is your most valuable asset; without it, effective leadership is almost impossible.” And finally, they must understand the role of compromise. Miller states that “if there is a secret to persuasion it’s found in the chemistry of compromise... compromise can mitigate fear (of authority) and reduce resistance to the ideas being proposed” (p. 19).

### **Leadership Training for Professional Newsroom Leaders**

Many media experts and newspaper editors state that the need for leadership training and the best way to approach that training is one of the biggest problems facing today’s newsrooms. Wizda (2000) states, “management training could easily be one of the biggest conundrums of the newsroom.” Although she states the opportunities for leadership training have increased in newsrooms over the past few years, the industry is still a long way from meeting the training needs of new and existing editors. Many journalists, who have held leadership positions, including Wizda, state that the transition from reporter to editor is overwhelming. Wizda describes the transition as a “nightmare.” Miller (2000) states “Most of us had little training in management. We earned editor’s jobs because we were good at something else” (p.20). Wizda quotes Miller as saying: “One day someone said, ‘You’re good at being a reporter, [now] you’re an assistant metro editor – and you’re in charge of these five reporters....The best reporters do not necessarily make the best managers, and they certainly don’t without training” (p.33). Miller as cited in Wizda (2000) states the newspaper industry loses most of its best

people when they are promoted to leadership positions and then become disillusioned when they don't have the leadership skills to handle the responsibilities. "Training isn't just important to keep people doing their jobs well, it's also important to keep people in their jobs" (p. 35). Leadership training, in the form of workshops or seminars, is designed to help leaders develop certain leadership competencies.

Assistant editors who are promoted to editor state that these two roles are very different and that being in an assistant position doesn't necessarily prepare a person to assume the role of editor (p. 32). When journalists are thrust into leadership positions without the proper training they can often experience a "crisis of confidence" for which some never recover, according to Miller (2000). "This sad script can be rewritten if editors take leadership development more seriously" (p.20).

The lack of leadership training can be a deciding factor for journalists who are considering a position at another newspaper or who are considering a move up with their current employer. Wizda (2000) cites Miller as stating "some of the best people get out of journalism at this point. They feel a lot of frustration, they look a level up and if they don't like what they see, there's going to be an exit decision at that point" (p. 35).

Wizda (2000) explains that another key problem is that many newspaper employees consider management training courses too general to apply to their needs. They do not embrace the idea that all management positions share at least some commonalities. Miller cautions that such a mind-set is ultimately detrimental. There are special situations and special skills called for in the newsroom, as is true for all arenas, "but to assume that the newsroom is a culture all its own is foolhardy....It says that we don't have anything to learn from the rest of the world" (Miller as cited in Wizda, 2000, p.34). Miller (2000) states that management skills need to be studied. He emphasizes communication, motivation, and evaluation in his seminars on effective newsroom management. He also states that new managers need to realize that people are different. "You have to learn to treat people the way they want to be treated. That means understanding the complexities and opportunities of diversity" (p. 20). He also concedes that conflict is inevitable and therefore "mastering conflict resolution is essential."

However, he also states that new editors must first learn to manage themselves. “Time is limited. Stress is not. Effective leaders learn to manage both” (p. 20).

There are several ways editors can help to build stronger newsroom leadership. Miller (2000) believes that editors must increase leadership training and states “Even those people with natural talents need to be coached through study and practice” (p. 20). Editors also need to “create a comprehensive curriculum that introduces the essential skills to newly minted editors and refreshes the veterans” (p.20). Finally he states that editors must learn to become better teachers. “Teaching may be [the editor’s] most important role in the newsroom. Making [your] management more effective means understanding that it’s about teaching, not controlling” (p.20).

Many experts emphasize that good employees don’t leave companies, they leave managers. Smith (2001) cites Buckingham stating:

People may join your organization because of the prestige of working for your newspapers or ... because they like your reputation for developing a career path, but how long each of your employees stays and how productive they are while they’re there depends massively on the person that they report directly to. (p.22)

This idea that people leave managers not companies is a recurring theme in many leadership seminars as well. It is one of the major principles proffered by The Poynter Institute leadership staff that conducts seminars both at the Institute and at newspapers around the country. Moore (2002) explains that during one seminar on “Recruiting the Best and the Brightest,” the Poynter faculty stressed the importance of respect, praise, trust, career development, and constant talk about high standards, as being less tangible aspects of management, but the most important to a leader’s success (p. 7).

Nesbitt (2001) states that “research shows newspapers spend on average, three-quarters of one percent of annual payroll on training and development, while the best-in class in other industries spend a minimum of three percent of annual payroll” (p. 14).

### **Leadership Attributes Critical for Student Newsroom Leaders**

Kouzes and Posner (1997) identified leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors that are critical to effective leadership across all organizations. Peters (2001)

identified the competencies, skills, and behaviors critical for effective leadership in professional newsrooms. To date, there is little scholarly research concerning the traits and characteristics that experienced college editors in chief say are necessary to effectively lead a student newspaper staff. Nor is there research to identify skills, competencies, and behaviors that may be unique to college newsroom leaders compared to professional newsroom leaders.

None-the-less, strong leadership has been identified as important to the success of college newspaper editors both in their current roles and in preparation for their future roles as professional journalists.

The competencies, skills, and behaviors necessary to be an effective college newsroom leader may be similar to all leaders or similar to those of professional newsroom leaders. However, in order to ensure the best leadership experience for the student journalist it is necessary to identify the characteristics that college newsroom leaders believe are most important, or are unique to the college setting. Confirming and developing those unique characteristics may have a profound effect on the students' overall view of leadership and, ultimately, their desire to remain in the field or accept a leadership role when they reach the professional level.

Most campus newspapers function much in the same way the professional press functions and journalism students use the campus newspaper as a training ground for jobs in the professional newspaper industry. It is important for them to be aware of the leadership skills necessary to be successful at the professional level but also to identify the leadership skills necessary for them to be successful college newsroom leaders. This is especially important because a recent report on the state of newsroom leadership by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Buckner, 2001) indicates that developing strong leadership skills is more critical now, than at any time in the past, to their future success as professional journalists.

Ingelhart (1993) reported that approximately 90 percent of college graduates hired by American daily newspapers have significant experience with the campus press (p. 106). Nelson (1988) adds that the college newspaper has been viewed as more than a tool for teaching writing, reporting, and editing (Nelson, 1988, as cited in Brandon, 2002,

p. 5). Brandon (2002) states that “management, sales, budgeting, advertising, design, public relations, and law are also considered to be vital functions of the college newspaper and therefore present training needs” (p.5). Brandon also states that “because so many people use the campus newspaper with the intent of becoming journalists, studies are needed to show how the campus newspaper has helped prepare the students for work”(p.4). However, Brandon indicates that more needs to be done regarding the quality of the learning environment at college newspapers. Brandon suggests that it's important to discuss the significance of the campus newspaper experience with the student managers and the student staff of campus newspapers to emphasize the importance of that experience as it relates to getting entry-level jobs and with overall success in the field. Although these authors view the newsroom as a tool to teach basic journalism and management they fail to emphasize or acknowledge that the college newspaper newsroom is also a training ground for leadership skills. The leadership training and experience they receive at this stage of their education will also play a role in their current success as college newsroom leaders and may play a pivotal role in their careers and in the future of the professional newsroom.

### **Leadership Training for Student Newsroom Leaders**

The need for training can also be seen at the college newsroom level where students function in similar roles to those of the professional workplace. As the value of leadership has increased for professional journalists, the pressure for student journalist to develop leadership skills prior to entering the professional newsroom has also increased. Not only is this training thought to help students to be more effective college newsroom leaders, it is also thought to help lessen the frustration new leaders often feel when they are not adequately prepared for professional leadership responsibilities.

Most college journalists have no formal leadership training when they accept the role of editor in chief. Like most professional journalists who ascend to this role, they have a strong background in reporting, writing, and editing; skills considered fundamental to the job of editor in chief, but have no formal leadership training. They are socialized leaders—leaders who have learned their leadership skills from watching other

leaders, from anecdotal advice, or from trial and error. This “socialized” approach is no longer considered an acceptable way to train leaders. However, journalism schools do not include leadership courses in the core curriculum despite complaints about the need for leadership training from student editors, college newspaper advisers, and professional journalists who deem training to be “critically important” to professional newsroom leaders (Buckner 2001, p. 5).

Most student media advisers and student journalists are aware of the need for leadership training. In an attempt to meet the perceived leadership training needs of these student newspaper editors, some student newspaper advisers conduct leadership workshops for the students they advise. In addition, student media organizations offer leadership seminars during state and national student journalism conventions. The number of leadership workshops has increased over the past several years. The majority of these leadership seminars and workshops last for one hour. A few last for two days to one week. Most base their instructional material on what professional journalists, college advisers, and incoming student editors say they think is important to that leadership role. This leadership training is therefore based primarily on anecdotal evidence.

Workshops offered during annual conferences sponsored by College Media Advisers (CMA), the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP), and Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA) include several sessions in the category of student leadership. “Leadership 101” and “Leadership and Personality Types-Understanding, Communication and Balance” are typical titles. “Leadership 101” presented during the CMA/ACP fall convention (CMA 2001) offered the following tips for student managers:

1. Honesty is vital. You cannot develop trust without it.
2. Acknowledge publicly the contributions of others. If a new student staff member is not comfortable, find out what will make them comfortable.
3. Leadership is linked to change. The best managers are risk-takers, perhaps making decisions that others would be afraid to make.
4. Leaders do not have to have all the answers. (7)

While this list is helpful, it only begins to speak to the complexities of the leadership role of editor in chief. “Leadership 101” was also offered during the CMA’s



Spring National College Media Convention in New York City in March 2002. The description states: “This panel will benefit student managers—particularly new managers—in any media. Topics covered include goal-setting, team-building, delegation, conflict management, leadership styles, and transition” (p. 25). During this same convention a seminar on media management offered tips on conducting “productive and fun” staff meetings. “When you follow these tips...your staff will show up ready to work and leave with a clear sense of purpose” (p. 24). Still another student leadership seminar at the same convention titled “So Much to Do, So Little Time” offered student leaders tips on time management. “The task facing new managers can be overwhelming.... This session will take a look at how you can prioritize and manage tasks to get the most out of every day and avoid your enemy: procrastination” (p.17).

Most of these convention sessions last for one hour and often cover a wide range of issues, many of which address management, not leadership challenges.

A week-long management seminar for incoming college newspaper editors has been held annually since 1996 at the University of Georgia. It’s sponsored by the University of Georgia College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the Cox Institute for Newspaper Management Studies. Their Website states the purpose of the seminar is to help “editors in chief acquire and sharpen skills in managing people, resources, and time while meeting and working with their peers from across the country.” It’s online advertisement states: “It’s likely your student newspaper’s new editor in chief this fall will have strong journalistic skills but little or no experience and training in managing a staff.” The website states that the seminar attracts 50 of the top editors in chief from across the country. Far more students apply for the seminar than the 50-student limit can serve. The 2002 seminar had a waiting list of 150 students. The students who have been accepted to participate in the program are surveyed prior to the beginning of the seminar to identify the management or leadership areas they would like to have addressed during the seminar. The selected student’s advisers are also surveyed to identify areas they regard as most critical. The week-long seminar in 2001 included sessions on strategic newspaper management; resumes and interviewing; market research; time management; moving from writer to manager; conflict management; no

train, no gain; personal leadership style; budget; college to corporate; editorial pages; managing change and 'reading' readers; the online newspaper; sensitive stories; craft of writing; visual thinking; getting down to business; libel's top ten list and privacy on campus; access to information; working with administrators; business law; trial by fire: my first year as editor in chief; what's wrong and right with college newspapers; and diversity in the newsroom. This list covers a wide range of worthy issues. However, it would be impossible for this approach to do little more than expose these future editors in chief to concepts that could easily require a full semester of instruction to fully comprehend.

Since 1995, WAUPM has sponsored a leadership conference for incoming student editors. The seminar is limited to those editors whose schools are affiliated with WAUPM. The design of this seminar, including the topics to be covered, is often dictated by the participants who complete surveys prior to the beginning of the program. The topics covered can range from "when to refuse advertising" to "handling complaints from readers." So, although they claim to be leadership training seminars, they don't concentrate on leadership.

In 1994, WAUPA surveyed college advisers and general managers to identify the type of leadership training needed by college editors. The unpublished results of this survey were lost in a flood (Larry Steward, personal communication, June 26, 2002). The survey was not repeated. According to Dr. Larry Steward, Campus Media Director at Colorado State University, who helps conduct the WAUPM leadership seminar, the WAUPM approach to training is student directed. At the beginning of the seminar, they have a round table discussion with the editors to discover the goals and objectives they want to establish for the training and then they brain storm for solutions (Larry Steward, personal communication, June 26, 2002).

While these seminars may be very useful in helping to raise awareness of the importance of strong leadership and in fostering the notion that training can help to develop leadership skills, there is no evidence that the current leadership training seminars and workshops are adequate to meet the most significant leadership training needs of college editors.

Probably the most comprehensive study to address the training and development of college newsroom editors was conducted by Harvey (2002) at Pennsylvania State University. Harvey developed a training program for The Daily Collegian, “a 20,000-circulation daily with a 13-member professional staff of support personnel and educators and an evolving staff of students” (p. 5). The program was developed “to give first-time editors the tools necessary to become better teachers and newsroom leaders among their peers” (p. 5).

Harvey acknowledges that while most student newspapers have training programs for new reporters, there is a need for programs to train beginning editors with the necessary tools to become better teachers and newsroom leaders among their peers. Harvey states that “while advisers are nurturing authority figures, it is the students who ultimately must provide leadership”(p.10). The study utilized the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) as its central methodology in the formative phase of the study. NGT is a method that allows “qualified individuals intimate with the issues at hand to participate freely in a brainstorming session without being overshadowed by others” (Harvey, p.6).

This 23-member panel included 18 student journalists, two staff professionals, two journalism professors and an editor from a mid-sized daily newspaper. Harvey, the principal investigator and news adviser to The Daily Collegian, describes the methods of the study as multi-layered, in which data were gathered in a three-step process over two years. “The first step was to help establish a mission statement and course framework, the second to develop a curriculum, and the third to analyze the effectiveness of the first two” (p. 6). After establishing a mission statement and course framework, the curriculum was tested on a pilot group of nine mid-level beat editors. The group provided a list of 11 key skills that they thought should be included in the curriculum, most of which dealt with management and specific journalism skills, not leadership issues. The list included: newsroom management, making story assignments, understanding of newsroom lingo, time management, personnel management, conflict/crisis management, conflict resolution, teaching skills, ability to work with others, communication skills and principles of being a good mentor. The group indicated that these skills should be enhanced or taught by securing the best personnel or instructors, by providing a forum

for discussion, by funneling industry information to editors, and by including experienced editors in training.

The author offers the Peer Editor Development Program as an educational model that can serve as a framework for journalism educators to develop a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of student editors and best addresses their own unique situations. Certainly, this research offers a scholarly approach to addressing many of the issues faced by college newsroom leaders. However, the study fails to distinguish between management and leadership, treating the two concepts as one function. For example, participants were asked to list three key management skills needed to be an effective newsroom manager, but no specific questions were asked of participants regarding leadership skills, competencies, and behaviors. The study did ask students to identify communications skills needed to be an effective newsroom manager. Communication is considered to be a key leadership skill. In addition to communication, participants identified teaching and mentoring, in the list of 11 key skills peer editors considered to be important. Teaching and mentoring are also considered to be key leadership skills. Experts tell us that, although there is a considerable amount of overlap in management and leadership, knowing the distinct differences is critical for today's leaders who must have certain leadership-specific attributes to be effective (Northouse 2001). While the study places a high degree of importance on peer collaboration, which many agree is critical for the training and success of college newsroom leaders, it does not address scholarly research and theory specific to leadership. Although this model may work for management training at large dailies with a large professional support staff, it does not address key leadership skills of college newsroom leaders. And, as Harvey acknowledges, this curriculum is unlikely to be applicable to management training at smaller newspapers. None-the-less, Harvey's scholarly approach helps to advance curriculum development for training college newsroom leaders.

Consequently, many organizations rely on a one-size fits-all approach to workshop contents. The contents often vary from workshop to workshop and often do not make a distinction between management skills and leadership skills, a problem also common to professional leadership training seminars. This may be explained in part,

because workshops for student as well as professional journalists are often taught by advisers or editors who are, more often than not, socialized leaders whose knowledge of leadership is informed by experience, not research or theory. While advisers play a critical role in an editor's development, they also complain of a lack of time to teach, partially because the student is in the role for a relatively short time and because the adviser has many other responsibilities. Frequently, editors who “come up through the ranks” from reporter to editor, often learn leadership behaviors and skills by observing top newsroom editors in their leadership roles. Harvey states “While advisers are nurturing authority figures, it is the students who ultimately must provide leadership” (p. 10). Harvey based his training development program for first-time editors on peer education theory, a concept that emphasizes the significance of the peer group itself becoming the reference point for its members providing a sense of independence, identity, and recognition (p. 6).

Another design flaw in these workshops or seminars is the lack of follow up training, a key component, experts tell us, for successful course design. Conger (1992) states that “a single, one time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change” (p. 192). For students participating in seminars, that follow-up training would have to be done by program managers or advisers. This makes agreement among educators about key leadership skills and the best way to teach and reinforce them even more critical to the long-term success of these seminars.

Those who established and developed these seminars have raised awareness and established a venue that fosters skill development. However, the designs and approaches of most of these seminars remain uninformed by scholarly research and theory. Without research to identify the competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced editors identify as critical to the role of top newsroom leader, and the training that will best meet those needs, seminars will not be effective in helping editors reach their full potential as leaders.

Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state that leadership can be taught. However, just as there is no research to identify the most critical competencies of student newsroom leaders, there is no research that addresses the most effective way to teach or develop

those competencies once they are identified. Nor is there agreement among journalism educators or college newspaper advisers about the leadership models or theories that will best develop the leadership strengths of student editors. Heilbrunn (1996) believes that the focus of studies in the leadership field has been too broad in trying to develop a generic model of leadership that can be applied to all leadership roles. "Leadership studies lack an adequate concern for context, historical or situational...leadership studies neglects the variety of arenas in which different kinds of leaders operate (p.8). As a result of "academic neglect" he says "we are largely clueless as to what makes a strong religious leader, culture leader, reform leader, intellectual leader, sports leader" (p.9). Heilbrunn (1996) emphasizes a generic model of leadership is limited because it does not address the unique "environments" or "variety of arenas" in which leaders function. Heilbrunn states that "the field of leadership studies has remained hobbled by its epistemological commitments" (p. 8).

Leadership researchers tell us that the success of leadership courses is dependent on their design, length, and format. Conger (1992) recommends using three key elements in any leadership course design to ensure a lasting impact from training: multiple sessions, pre- and post course contact, and innovative class sessions. The course design attempts to follow the LeaderLab model developed by Robert Burnside and Victoria Guthrie (1991), at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. "LeaderLab is built on the premise that a single, one time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change" (Conger 1992, p.192).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY**

This descriptive study was designed to identify the competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college newsroom leaders designate as critical for effective student newsroom leadership. The aim of the study was to provide incoming college newsroom editors with leadership information deemed most valuable by their experienced peers. This information base can then be utilized by decision makers who design leadership courses, workshops, and seminars, to better meet leadership training needs of college newspaper editors.

#### **Rationale for Use of the Delphi Technique**

The Delphi technique was chosen for this study because its unique methods of inquiry were better suited to securing collaborative, systematic participation from college editors in chief. The Delphi technique was selected to structure this group process because it allows participants to participate equally, can provide valuable insight into a particular problem, allows participation of student editors across a wide geographic area, is well-suited to computerized conferencing, guarantees anonymity to the participants, and can be highly motivating for respondents (Pill 1970, p.58).

The Delphi is a panel study developed by Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer of the Rand Corporation. They first used the Delphi method in 1953 to solicit the opinions of seven atomic warfare experts in order to address a specific military problem (Helmer, 1983). While the principal area of application has remained technological forecasting, it has been used in many other contexts in which judgmental information is indispensable (Linstone and Turoff, 1975). Helmer (1983) explains the intent of the Delphi technique is to allow a group of specialists with unique knowledge of a specific problem to obtain insight into the problem under study. Helmer emphasizes that the Delphi technique was designed to allow a group of individuals to deal with complex problems with a minimum of interference from the kind of psychological distractions that often affect open-forum discussions among panels of experts, and to achieve as close a consensus as possible

compatible with individual divergences from the central tendency of the panel's opinions (p.134).

The Delphi technique was particularly useful to this study because the experts were, in fact, students. While they were indeed in charge of the newsroom and had positions of authority, they did not necessarily consider themselves experts. Also, they may have been reluctant to publicly express their views in a group meeting for fear of rejection or ridicule from the group or when their responses could be linked to them and relayed to a person in a position of authority over them. In many cases they answered to, or worked closely with, an adviser who may or may not have authority over them. This editor-adviser relationship is often amicable and highly supportive, but can be adversarial. In either case, if advisers or others in authority positions over the student experts could connect the students' responses with the students this could hinder candid responses from panel participants. For these reasons, the Delphi offered the most nonrestrictive method of securing candid responses from the student experts. Weaver (1971) asserts the primary justifications for the use of Delphi in situations like this is that, "it prevents professional status and high position from forcing judgments in certain directions as frequently occurs when panels of experts meet" (p. 267). Murry and Hammons (1995) emphasize that the Delphi "helps the researcher avoid the typical problems associated with face-to-face meetings, such as the bandwagon effect and deference to authority" (p. 433).

Linstone and Turoff (1975) describe the Delphi technique "as a method for structuring a group communication process, so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with complex problems" (p.3). According to Weaver (1971), the Delphi method is a fairly easy means of producing valuable information from experts, which allows the gathering of information in a relatively short time and provides valuable insight into a particular problem.

Student editors located in colleges and universities across the United States have little opportunity to interact with one another and are often too busy with school and editorial responsibilities to participate in studies. In addition, those students serving in top leadership roles, such as editor in chief, often do so during their senior year.



Researchers who wish to poll these student editors after they have served in that role, can encounter problems tracking these students after graduation. As a result, there is little research that addresses the opinions of experienced college newsroom leaders—those who should have the most relevant input—on the competencies, skills, and behaviors they deemed critical for effective student newsroom leadership or their insight into the training that could have enhanced their leadership skills.

The Delphi's use of computerized conferencing facilitated the panelist's participation after graduation. Computerized conferencing allowed the student experts to continue their participation as a panelist when face-to-face meetings would be jeopardized by attrition due to graduation. Also, the use of computerized conferencing is particularly well-suited to this body of experts because of their familiarity and comfort level using electronic communication.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) state that overall, computerized conferencing offers a number of advantages over face-to-face meetings, telephone or video conferencing, or letters when any of the following conditions are met:

1. The group is spread out geographically
2. A written record is desirable
3. The individuals are busy and frequent meetings are difficult
4. Topics are complex and require reflection and contemplation from the conferees
5. Insufficient travel opportunity is available
6. A large group is involved (15-50)
7. Disagreement exists which requires anonymity to promote the discussion...or exchange of ideas. (p. 491)

Among the other advantages associated with the use of the Delphi technique, Presser and Blair (1994) found that using expert panels were more productive and less expensive than other questionnaire methods. And Pill (1971) states that the Delphi exercise can be highly motivating for respondents (p. 58).

Linstone and Turoff (1975) add that the Delphi is particularly well suited when the problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from

subjective judgments on a collective basis. It is also useful when the heterogeneity of the participants must be preserved to assure validity of the results, such as avoiding domination by strength of personality (p. 4).

Murry and Hammons (1995) explain that although the Delphi method was originally conceived as a quantitative methodology, it is now considered a reliable qualitative research method with potential for use in problem solving, decision making, and group consensus-reaching in a variety of areas (p.425). This prediction was made by Linstone and Turoff (1975) who concluded that the Delphi process had “the potential of becoming a basic tool of society, representing a new level of ability to use information from all segments of society” (p.496).

Babbie (1992) describes the Delphi technique as a method in which People are asked to address a problem anonymously. They are then presented with the results of the first set of comments and are asked to reconsider the issue and comment again. This alternation of anonymous input and the reporting of results can be repeated several times—ideally until consensus is achieved. The key is that participants can participate equally—they don’t know which comment is from the boss and which is from the mail clerk-and no one knows what they said initially, they can change their minds without losing face. (p. 486)

This makes the Delphi technique particularly beneficial when the researcher is attempting to establish preliminary information. Wimmer (1987) states that there are certain advantages to using qualitative methods when conducting research when there is no body of knowledge concerning the topic. It is an excellent way to get preliminary information to increase the researcher’s “depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 50). Martino (1978) explains:

The Delphi technique was developed to overcome the disadvantages of conventional committee action. The group interaction in Delphi is anonymous in the sense that comments, forecasts, and the like are not identified as to their originator but are presented to the group in such a way as to suppress any identification. (p. 391)

Although advancement in automation via computerized conferencing has had an impact on the use of the Delphi method, Linstone and Turoff (1975) predicted that sociological change would have “an enormous impact” on the use of the Delphi method. Specifically, these authors stated that as Western society transitions from a uniformity—seeking type to one which emphasizes heterogeneity, that the Delphi method would be “exceptionally well adaptable to this emerging logic.” They offer the following observations:

1. It is interactionist rather than hierarchical.
2. The feedback can be positive as well as negative, thus amplifying differences as much as dampening them out. There is no a priori reason that convergence must and should result during the Delphi process. Differences can be crystallized and heterogeneity sharpened.
3. The process is mutualistic rather than unidirectional. Ideas can originate with any participant and need not flow from a single source.
4. The method is symbiotic rather than competitive...the feedback explains and clarifies, thus facilitating symbiosis.
5. Good Delphis tend to seek rational and contextual representations of a problem and avoid preclassification or rigid atomistic considerations or structures.
6. Qualitative input are normal in Delphis that involve personal judgment and subjective views. (p. 495)

### **Versatility of the Delphi Methodology**

The Delphi methodology has been used to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research. The Delphi method, a descriptive research design traditionally used for longitudinal research in quantitative studies, has become more and more popular in the social sciences (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). Depending on its execution, the Delphi methodology can yield both quantitative and qualitative results. It allows for subjective opinions and responses and purposive sampling, yet allows for the development of structured questionnaires and rank ordering of statements.

For example, in explaining the versatility of Delphi as a qualitative method, Murry and Hammons (1995) state that the successive iterations or rounds used in the Delphi continue “until consensus is reached on items or until there is enough convergence to justify using results without complete consensus” (Murry and Hammons, p. 429).

Helmer (1983), a co-inventor of the Delphi method explains the purpose of the consecutive rounds is to achieve as close a consensus as possible compatible with individual divergences from the central tendency of the panel’s opinions (Helmer, p.134).

While this study employed only one methodology to collect data; the Delphi, the results produced both qualitative and quantitative data.

Wimmer and Dominick (2000) states that “despite their differences, many researchers are now using a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to understand fully the phenomenon they are studying” (p.106). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) explain that it is possible to combine qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, in fact they stress that the use of multiple methods to collect data can enhance the validity of case study findings. “Because quantitative research implies the use of numerical data, many people believe that statistics are the exclusive domain of quantitative research. In fact statistics are used...in many qualitative studies as well (p. 168). Wimmer (2000) quotes Miles and Huberman (1994) on the use of both methodologies:

It is getting harder to find any methodologists solidly encamped in one epistemology or the other. More and more “quantitative” methodologists...are using naturalistic and phenomenological approaches to complement tests, surveys, and structured interviews. On the other side, an increasing number of ethnographers and qualitative researchers are using predesigned conceptual frameworks and prestructured instrumentation....Most people now see the world with more ecumenical eyes. (p. 20)

While the Delphi method has advantages for securing valuable insight into a particular problem researchers warn that there are disadvantages. Murry and Hammons (1995) describe several cautions and disadvantages:

1. The reliability of the Delphi research method depends on the careful selection of panelists with expertise on the issue under study.
  2. In spite of the claim Weaver (1971) makes that the Delphi method allows for the gathering of information in a relatively short time, Murry and Hammons state that a Delphi study can take up to four or five months to complete the necessary rounds of questionnaires to achieve consensus.
  3. Questions formulated by the researcher may influence the panel responses.
  4. It may be difficult to fully assess and utilize the expertise of the panel because they never meet face to face.
  5. The unexpected cannot be taken into account, such as a participant's failure to fully understand the purpose of the study.
  6. Lack of participant motivation to fully participate in the study may lead to sample attrition. Therefore purposive sampling may be necessary because the study could easily require from thirty minutes to two hours for each round.
- (p.427)

### **The Delphi Process**

The Delphi process includes an exploration phase followed by an evaluation phase. During the exploration phase the following steps are followed:

1. A working problem is identified (newsroom leadership as previously defined)
2. A panel of experts, the Delphi Panel, is recruited
3. The opinions or judgments of panel members about the working problem are requested, usually in the form of open-ended questions (Murry and Hammons, 1995).

### **Development of the Delphi Panel**

Murry and Hammons (1995) state that the selection criterion for panelists who participate in the Delphi study is based on their expertise in the subject or problem under study. “Expertise implies that the individual panelists have more knowledge about the subject matter than most people, or that they possess certain work experience, or are members in a relevant professional association” (p. 428). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explain that researchers “choose particular subjects to include because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory” (p. 65). Because this study addressed college newspaper editors’ perspective, a random sample of all college students would not have been productive. Erlandson (1993) states that the researcher must select the sources that will most help to answer the research questions and fit the basic purpose of the study (p. 83). This type of purposive sampling is recommended by Murry and Hammons because a lack of panelists’ motivation to fully participate in the study may lead to sample attrition (p. 427). Pill (1971) states that “the Delphi exercise can be a highly motivating for a group of knowledgeable people” (p. 58).

Panelists were college newsroom leaders with first-hand knowledge and therefore were the best qualified to discuss the issue of college newsroom leadership. In order to secure the best possible participants for this study, recommendations were obtained from college journalism advisers who are also members of College Media Advisers (CMA). CMA is a national organization dedicated to serving the needs of collegiate student media programs and their advisers. E-mails were sent to 132 advisers (Appendix A) on October 3, 2003, explaining the purpose of the study and the methodology to be employed. Each adviser was asked to nominate two students to participate as part of the expert panel. The principal selection criteria was that they had served no less than three months in the role of editor in chief and had been out of the role for no more than 12 months. Advisers were also asked to nominate candidates who they deemed motivated to remain in the study to its completion. Thirty-four advisers nominated 48 students. The request for their participation was sent from the CDRL on November 16, 2003, and 25 students agreed to participate in the study.

The number of participants necessary to serve on a Delphi panel has been debated. However, the final panel should be comprised of at least ten members (Parente and Anderson-Parente, 1987, as cited in Murry and Hammons, 1995). The authors quote Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson as saying that “few new ideas are generated within a homogeneous group once the size exceeds 30 well-chosen participants” and Brooks (1979) as saying “little improvement in results is achieved with groups of more than 25” (p. 428). The number of participants in the first round of this study met these criteria.

The initial e-mail to the adviser was followed-up by an e-mail to thank the adviser for nominating potential participants for the expert panel and to clarify any misconceptions or confusion concerning the study. Murry and Hammons (1995) recommend that panelists be contacted by telephone or in a written letter that explains the study. It should also include an explanation of the Delphi method, the time commitment involved in participating, and invite the person to become a panelist (p. 428). The 48 nominees were then contacted by e-mail through The Texas A&M University Center for Distance Learning Research (CDLR) informing them of their nomination, explaining the study, and asking them to consider being a participant on the panel of experts. (Appendix B). The 25 nominees who agreed to participate were given instructions to begin the study by completing demographic information, such as: age, gender, college enrollment, years of experience, and frequency of newspaper publication (Appendix C). These data were compiled and are presented in Chapter 4.

### **Center for Distance Learning Research Technical Assistance**

In order to facilitate computerized conferencing necessary for the execution of this computer-based Delphi study, technical assistance was provided from the Texas A&M University Center for Distance Learning Research (CDRL). Following the design of previous Delphi studies, Internet and Web-based applications were used to disseminate, display, collect, and transfer information through a central server to a database. The applications were designed to provide respondent anonymity. This study employed electronic mail to communicate with advisers and panelists; a Web site designed to present electronic questionnaires and to receive panelists' responses; a secure

server through which information was sent and received; and a database to capture, codify, and calculate results to be used in subsequent rounds and from which to draw conclusions.

### **The Delphi Rounds**

After the 25 experts were empanelled, the researcher proceeded with Round One, which Murry and Hammons (1995) describe as the latter part of the exploration phase.

They explain

The typical first round questionnaire uses an open-ended format to elicit individual judgments or opinions from each member of the panel about the particular issue or problem under study. In essence, round one amounts to an anonymous brainstorming session. (p. 424)

Round Two begins the evaluation phase. Following the Murry and Hammons (1995) model, the second-round questionnaire asks the panel to:

1. Consider, rank, and/or rate, edit, and comment upon the responses developed during Round One.
2. Typically the respondents will be asked to rank and/or rate responses using a Likert Scale. (Murry and Hammons, 1995, p. 424)

Round Three was designed for the panel to give feedback about the previous round and, if possible, achieve consensus among panelists about the problem under consideration.

1. All responses from Round Two are tabulated. The researcher calculates frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations for each questionnaire item and reports back to the panelists.
2. Each panelist is again requested to review his or her individual responses and to revise or justify his or her position on any score that falls outside the central tendency (Murry & Hammons, 1995).

This procedure of requerying, tabulating, and reporting back to the panelists continues in subsequent rounds until convergence or stability of panel members'



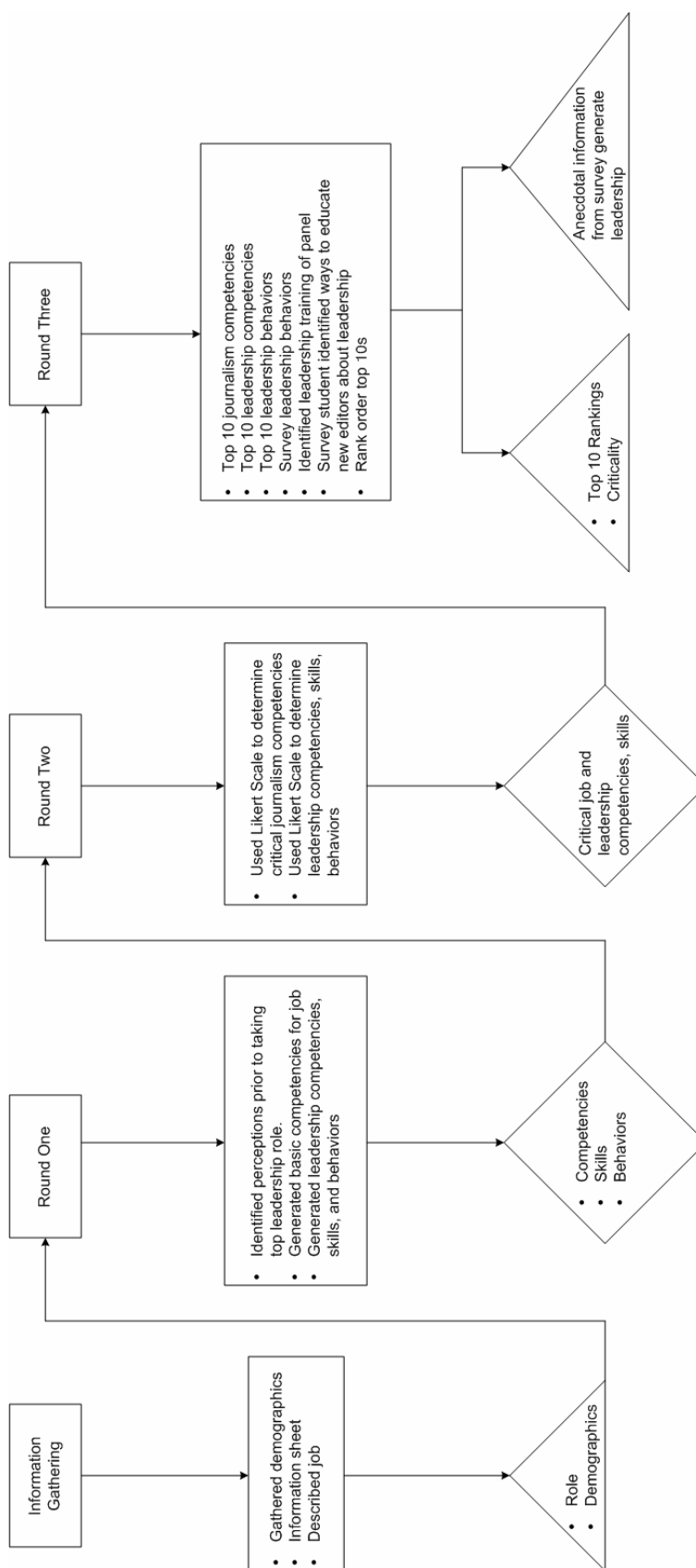
responses is achieved (Sackman, 1974). A flow chart depicting this procedure is shown on Figure 1.

### **Round One**

In order to develop the preliminary information for this study, students were asked to comment on their experience as a leader (the problem under investigation). The panelists were asked 13 questions, of which 12 were open-ended. The Round One questionnaire is provided in Appendix D. They were asked to identify basic journalism competencies. They were asked about their knowledge of the differences in management and leadership. They were asked to identify the competencies, skills, and behaviors they considered most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief. They were also asked what competencies, skills, and behaviors they admired in leaders they worked under and which of these characteristics they disliked. They were asked to identify significant shortfalls among college newsroom leaders and to identify their misconceptions about the role before entering the role. They were asked if leadership training was available to them, if they took advantage of the training, and if and how that training helped. Twenty-five experts responded to Round One.

Five questions in Round One were designed to solicit background information and were not intended for use in subsequent rounds. These questions (2, 3, 4, 5, and 8) were asked in order to establish background information on participants such as their prior perceptions and knowledge of that role, as well as their understanding of the differences in management and leadership. Since these questions dealt with the experts' experiences prior to assuming the role of editor in chief, these questions were not returned to the panel in Round Two for consensus building. However, the results of these questions are reported in the analysis and in the final summary.

**Figure 1. Delphi Process Flow Chart**



It was important that the initial round of questions elicit the most comprehensive information possible in an effort to establish an accurate representation of the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors panelists regarded as critical to newsroom leaders. Most of the questions concerning the role of top newsroom leader were open-ended, but did ask panelists to focus on a specific area or component of leadership. Question 13 was included to further facilitate the brainstorming function of the Delphi process. This question gave participants another opportunity to identify leadership issues that may not have been addressed in the previous questions or were not provided in the panelists replies to the other questions, but were key issues panelists consider critical to the role of top newsroom leader. Question 13 was not returned for consensus, however, some responses to Question 13 were placed, where appropriate, in responses to questions that were returned in Round Two.

The responses to questions 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were submitted for consensus in Round Two.

Responses to all open-ended questions were analyzed using a five-step process. The five steps include:

Step 1: All responses to each of the 13 Round One questions were copied to separate computer files to allow the responses to each question to be compared and analyzed. The responses for Round One questions are provided in Appendix E.

Step 2: Words and phrases that were germane to the question were highlighted and underlined. In addition, specific passages that clearly emphasized the issue were also highlighted for use as quotations for the analysis and conclusions.

Step 3: The words and phrases were copied to a location directly beneath the response from which they were taken. This was done to assure there was a link between the words and phrases and the original response. This was also done to assure that the words and phrases could be related to the original context of the response.

Step 4: The words and phrases identified in Step 3 were then placed in a summary table at the end of the computer file. The summary table was copied to a location at the end of the computer file and re-named final summary.

Step 5: The data in the final summary were examined to remove duplicate responses (motivates; ability to motivate), similar responses (role model; leads by example), or responses that upon review did not specifically address the question (time management). If a question arose regarding a selected word or phrase, it was reviewed in the context of the original response prior to including or dismissing the information.

Therefore, each open-ended question has a computer file containing the following:

1. The question and all of the responses with the important words and phrases highlighted
2. A short list of highlighted words and phrases for each respondent
3. A summary table of all highlighted words and phrases
4. A final summary that includes those words and phrases used to formulate questions for a subsequent round, or
5. A final summary for those questions not used in consensus building, but to be used to formulate recommendations and conclusions regarding background and experience.

## **Round Two**

Round Two consisted of lists of responses to seven of the original questions. The panel was asked to rate responses for each question on a Likert Scale, with choices ranging from least important to most important, not critical to most critical, and not significant to most significant. There were four possible responses, therefore eliminating a neutral choice. The Round Two instrument was made available to panelists through the internet on February 9. Twenty-four responses were returned by March 6. These data were analyzed and formed the basis for seven of the questions submitted for consensus in Round Three. Round Three was returned to panelists on March 9, 2004.

Since the goal of this study was to identify those skills, competencies, and behaviors that college newsroom editors regard as most important to their success, only those items with the highest rating from Round Two were returned to the panel for consensus in Round Three.

A different cutoff point was used for each set of skills, competencies and behaviors in the seven questions, however, at least 75 percent of all items in Round Two were returned to panelists in Round Three. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most critical characteristics. The remaining items in each list were placed in the order of importance by ranking. Example: 4, 3.99, 3.87, etc. They were returned to the panel in Round Three.

### **Round Three**

The purpose of Round Three of the study was two fold:

1. To reach consensus on replies to the seven questions concerning leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors returned to panelists from Round Two; and
2. To obtain information on the best ways to provide leadership training to college newsroom leaders

For each of the seven questions returned for consensus, panelists were asked to choose three items from the list that they regarded as the most critical, significant, or important to a college newsroom leader. This required the experts to make a choice and helped facilitate consensus.

The six remaining Round Three questions were to solicit responses related to training. The five open-ended questions in Round Three were analyzed in the same manner as the open-ended questions in Round One.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to discover if there is widespread agreement among experienced editors in chief of college newspapers about the most valuable or the most critical leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors needed for that role. Identifying these leadership characteristics will help clarify and broaden the understanding of the role of editor in chief for current and future college newsroom leaders. It will allow editors to better focus on strengthening and developing the leadership skills their experienced peers have identified as most critical to their success. Students who understand the skills unique to student newsroom leadership will be better prepared to mentor and teach their peers; advisers and educators will have the benefit of this information in their efforts to mentor and help develop student newsroom leaders. It will also help those who design course curriculum specific to student newspaper leadership development to have a better understanding of the leadership training needs student editors say are most critical to their success.

Identifying leadership skills unique to the college newsroom experience is significant because success at the college level may have an impact on students' decision to pursue journalism at the professional level, and their desire to embrace other leadership positions in the future.

The three research questions that directed the study were:

1. What are the most significant leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors student editors say are necessary to be successful in the role of editor in chief?
2. How do the leadership competencies identified by the expert panelists as necessary for success in the student newsroom culture compare to those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders?
3. What recommendations do these editors have for the development and training of future editors?

### **Demographics**

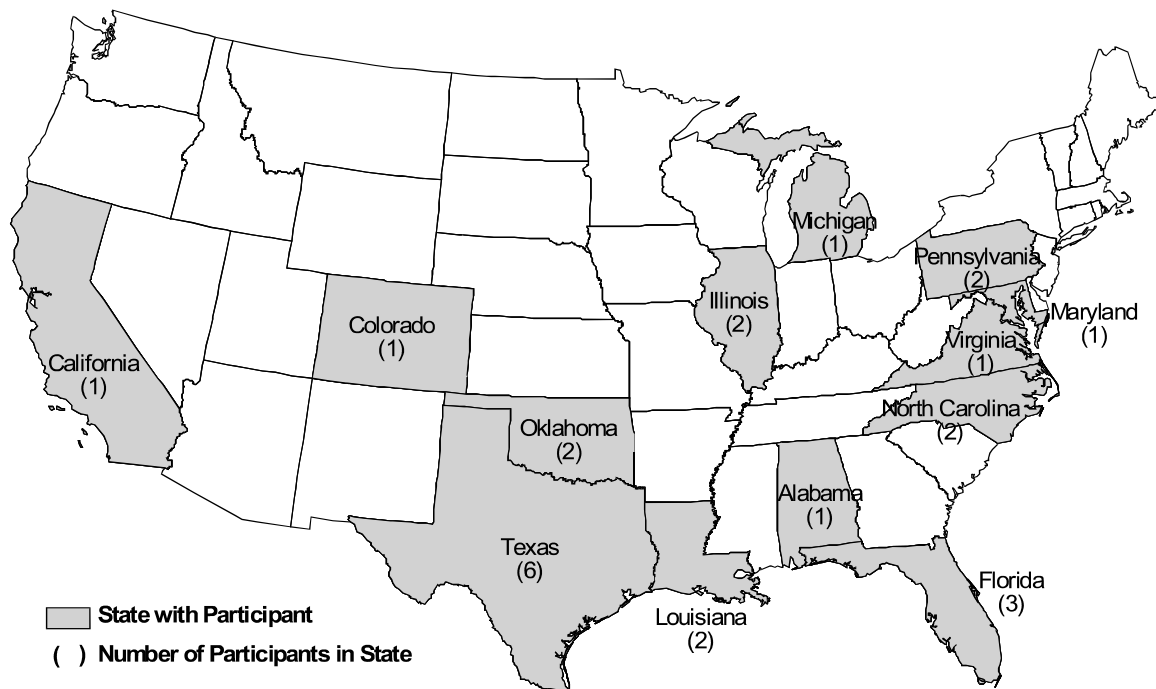
Experienced college newsroom leaders from across the United States served as participants on the expert panel for this study. The panel includes traditional and non-traditional aged students, students from both large and small public and private schools, students from religious and non-religious affiliated schools, students from one historically black university, and schools with daily and non-daily publications of its student newspapers. Panelists were nominated by their college newspaper advisers to participate based on the advisers' knowledge of each editor's leadership experience and motivation to participate in and complete the study. Thirty-four advisers, from the 132 college newspaper advisers contacted, nominated 48 current or previous student editors as qualified to serve as expert panelists. These 48 nominees were contacted and invited to participate. Twenty-five of the 48 students nominated responded "yes" to the initial request for participation. The 25 participants, who made up the expert panel, were current or previous editors of college newspapers from 19 colleges or universities, in 13 states, as listed in Table 1 and shown on Figure 2.

As shown in Table 1, 18 of these participants served as editors at four-year public institutions with student populations that ranged from approximately 7,500 to 44,000. Four participants were editors from four-year private institutions with student populations of 3,000 to 12,000. Three participants were students from two-year public community colleges with student populations that ranged from 3,000 to 26,000.

Round One had 25 participants throughout the United States (Table 2). Rounds Two and Three had 23 participants from the original Round One group. The study lost one participant from Colorado and one from Texas.

**Table 1. List of Participants' College or University**

College or University	State	Enrollment	Public/Private	Participants
1. Duke University	North Carolina	12,000	4-year private	1
2. East Carolina University	North Carolina	19,200	4-year public	1
3. Eastfield College	Texas	11,000	2-year public	1
4. Florida A&M University	Florida	11,292	4-year public	3
5. Loyola College-Maryland	Maryland	4,000	4-year private	1
6. Monroe County Community College	Michigan	3,000	2-year public	1
7. Nicholls State University	Louisiana	7,100	4-year public	2
8. Southern Illinois University	Illinois	12,000	4-year public	2
9. Tarrant County Community College	Texas	26,000	2-year public	1
10. Temple University	Pennsylvania	30,000	4-year public	1
11. Texas A&M University	Texas	44,000	4-year public	1
12. University of Alabama- Birmingham	Alabama	16,500	4-year public	1
13. University of Colorado	Colorado	7,400	4-year public	1
14. University of Oklahoma	Oklahoma	25,000	4-year public	2
15. University of Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	26,000	4-year public	1
16. University of San Francisco	California	8,000	4-year private	1
17. University of St. Thomas	Texas	3,000	4-year private	1
18. University of Texas-Arlington	Texas	21,500	4-year public	2
19. Virginia Institute of Technology	Virginia	25,000	4-year public	1

**Figure 2. Geographic Distribution of Participants**



**Table 2. Geographic Distribution of Participants by Rounds by State**

Round One 1	Round Two 2	Round Three 3
Alabama (1)	Alabama (1)	Alabama (1)
California (1)	California (1)	California (1)
Colorado (1)	Florida (3)	Florida (3)
Florida (3)	Illinois (2)	Illinois (2)
Illinois (2)	Louisiana (2)	Louisiana (2)
Louisiana (2)	Maryland (1)	Maryland (1)
Maryland (1)	Michigan (1)	Michigan (1)
Michigan (1)	North Carolina (2)	North Carolina (2)
North Carolina (2)	Oklahoma (2)	Oklahoma (2)
Oklahoma (2)	Pennsylvania (2)	Pennsylvania (2)
Pennsylvania (2)	Texas (5)	Texas (5)
Texas (6)	Virginia (1)	Virginia (1)
Virginia (1)		

Eligible candidates were students who have served in the role of editor in chief (or managing editor if that person has the greatest leadership responsibilities) for no less than three months and have been out of the role for no more than 18 months. The initial panel, those responding to Round One, was made up of 22 editors in chief and three managing editors. The remaining rounds were made up of 21 editors in chief and two managing editors. The 22 editors in chief reported an average of 3.4 years of college newspaper experience at the time of the study. While two of the panelists reported seven years experience, and one panelist reported having 1.5 years of experience, most students had between 2.5 and 3 years experience. The three managing editors reported one, four, and seven years of experience. The managing editor who reported having seven years experience was 22 years old at the time of the study, and had included experience prior to college. The other editor that reported seven years experience had worked for several years at a professional newspaper prior to college. Of the 22 panelists who were editors in chief, 11 reported they had served as managing editor, or the equivalent, before assuming the top newsroom position. Six reported they had served as news editor, and three reported serving as section editors, including online editor, university editor, and features editor. Two of the editors in chief, both from mid-size schools with student populations between 7,000 and 12,000, were reporters before assuming the top position. Of the three managing editors, one served as a reporter, one served as sports editor, and one served as summer editor.

Table 3 provides information on frequency of publication. Five of the 25 college newsroom leaders, or 20 percent of the panel, were editors of daily newspapers that published five days a week. Nine panelists, or 36 percent of the panel, were editors of papers that published between 2 and 4 days per week. Editors of weekly publications made up the larger group, with 8 panelists, or 32 percent. One panelist was editor of a bi-weekly (published every two weeks) and the remaining 2 panelists were editors of a

**Table 3. Frequency of Publications**

Frequency of Publication	Number of Editors	Percent of Respondents
5 days per week	5	20 percent
4 days per week	3	12 percent
3 days per week	4	16 percent
2 days per week	2	8 percent
Weekly	8	32 percent
Bi-weekly	1	4 percent
Monthly	2	8 percent

monthly newspaper. While editors of weekly newspapers made up 32 percent of the participants, 14 panelist or 56 percent had experience with publications that published more frequently.

The genders of participants in the Delphi rounds are shown in Table 4. The initial expert panel of 25 members contained 11 males and 14 females. The final panels for Rounds Two and Three each contained 23 members with 10 males and 13 females.

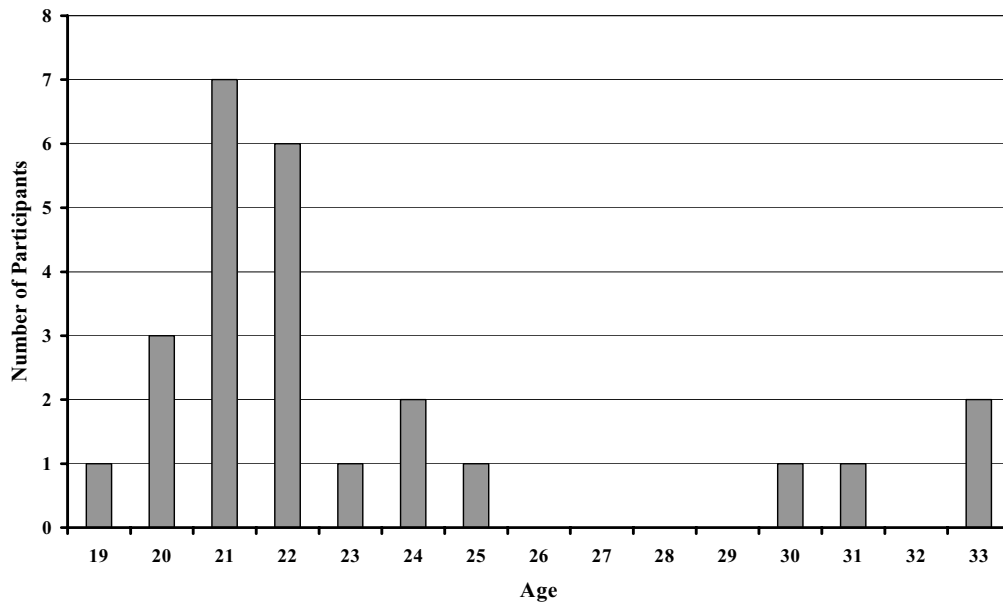
**Table 4. Gender of Participants by Rounds**

Round	Males	Females
1	11	14
2	10	13
3	10	13

The age distribution of the expert panelists is shown on Figure 3. The ages range from 19 to 33 with the mean, mode, and median ages of 21, 22, and 23, respectively.

There is a bimodal distribution of participant ages. Editors aged 19 to 25, 84 percent, represent traditional college students that began college immediately after high school or within 1 to 3 years of high school graduation. The second group, ages 30 to 33, contains 16 percent of the participant population and represents non-traditional students.

**Figure 3. Age Distribution of Participants**



The panel demonstrated a high level of motivation to participate in the study as well as a high level of commitment to completing all three rounds of the study. This was significant because lack of participant motivation is a possible disadvantage to the Delphi approach (Murry and Hammons, 1995). Only two of the original participants were unable to finish the study. Both panelists dropped out after Round 1, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Response Rate for Participants for Each Round**

Round	Number of Respondents N=25	Percentage
1	25	100%
2	23	92 %
3	23	92 %

The following observations offer several possible explanations for the panels' motivation and commitment and, ultimately, the low attrition rate:

1. College media advisers who were asked to nominate potential panelists responded to the request by nominating editors they thought would be motivated to complete the study.
2. The advisers who nominated potential panel members showed a high interest in the research subject. As a result, they were willing to take the time to identify individuals who met the criteria for participation on the panel. They were also willing to contact students, ask them to contact the researcher, or send the information to the researcher to contact the students directly. This use of purposive sampling to identify panel members helped secure panelists with the expertise concerning the issue under study and who had the motivation to participate in the study.
3. The students who agreed to participate demonstrated interest in the subject matter and the opportunity to express their opinions and describe their experiences as shown by their continued participation throughout this study. This was most evident at the beginning of the study when several students had problems accessing the study on the Center for Distance Learning Website. Whereas many student editors with demanding publication schedules and college coursework may have abandoned the study out of frustration, they instead showed commitment to the study by contacting the researcher for help in solving access problems.
4. The computer-mediated format of this study allowed panelists to respond using a medium with which they are familiar. It was convenient, in that it allowed panelists to respond within the allocated time.
5. The researcher wrote personal e-mails to each panelist following each Round of the study thanking them for their participation and commitment to the study. This allowed the researcher to reinforce that the participant was part of an expert panel of 25. A representative copy of one of these e-mails is included in Appendix F.

### **Delphi Instruments for Each Round**

In order to answer the three research questions that guided this study, three rounds of questions were sent to panelists. These questions were designed to identify panelists' prior perceptions and knowledge of the role of top newsroom leader; to identify specific leadership skills, competencies, and behaviors they regarded as critical to that position; and recommendations panelists had for the future leadership development and training of editors.

#### **Round One Instrument**

The experts responded to 13 questions in Round One (Table 6). It was important that the initial round of questions elicit the most comprehensive information possible in an effort to establish an accurate representation of the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors panelists regarded as critical to newsroom leaders. Most of the questions concerning the role of top newsroom leaders were open-ended, but did ask panelists to focus on a specific area or component of leadership. Question 13 was included to help identify issues that may not have been identified in the previous questions or in the panelists' replies, but were considered key issues to the panelists.

Panelists were asked to identify basic journalism competencies, to discuss their perceptions of the editor in chief leadership role before serving in that role, and to discuss their experiences after serving in that role. Answers to these open-ended questions were critical because synthesis of panelists' views formed the basis for all consecutive rounds.

Question 1 asked experts to identify the specific journalism competencies and skills they perceived as necessary to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief. The results were returned to the experts in Round Two for consensus building. Although these skills are not specific to leadership, they are considered important to identify because experts tell us that leaders need "functional competence" in their field to be effective leaders. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state they are "noticing a trend toward requiring more technical competence of leaders" (p. 25). This may be especially true in the college newsroom culture where it is necessary for newsroom leaders to be peer teachers (Harvey, 2002).

**Table 6. Round One Questions**

- 
1. As a rule, what basic journalism competencies should an incoming editor in chief or managing editor have?
  2. Were you aware or were you made aware of the differences in management and leadership before you became editor in chief or managing editor?
  3. How important is that distinction (in question 2) to a college newsroom leader?
  4. Before becoming editor in chief or managing editor, what leadership competencies did you most admire in student newsroom leaders?
  5. Give examples of ways you tried to emulate the leadership competencies you most admired in newsroom leaders when you became editor in chief or managing editor.
  6. In your expert opinion, what leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors do you think are most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief? List as many as you like.
  7. What leadership competencies do you lack that you think would have helped you be a more effective leader?
  8. Before entering the role, what was your biggest misconception about the leadership role of editor in chief or managing editor?
  9. How has the experience of being a college newspaper editor shaped your understanding of the editor in chief leadership position?
  10. Do you think there are any leadership competencies that are unique to being a college editor in chief (as opposed to professional leadership roles)?
  11. What separates an average student newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader?
  12. What do you regard as the most significant shortfall in leadership among most college newspaper editors?
  13. Specific to the subject of student newsroom leadership, what would you like to add that you think would advance the understanding of that role?
- 

Five of the 13 questions (2, 3, 4, 5, and 8) were asked in order to establish information concerning participants' prior perceptions and knowledge of the top leadership position, as well as their understanding of the differences in management and leadership. Participants' responses to questions 2 and 3 described their understanding, as well as misconceptions, of the differences in leadership and management. Their responses to question 8 described their understanding and misconceptions of the top leadership role. Their responses to questions 4 and 5 were used to answer Research Question 2. Since these questions dealt with the experts' experiences prior to assuming the role of editor in chief, these questions were not returned to the panel in Round Two

for consensus building. However, the results of these questions are reported in this analysis and in the final summary. The replies from the panelists to these questions are included in the analysis, but are not treated as quantitative data. Their comments are included to provide a broader understanding of the way these students interpret their experiences and perceive their roles within their individual newsroom cultures. Since the makeup of the panel includes students from a wide range of schools and newsroom situations, the responses elucidate the extent to which the results are representative of the most critical competencies, skills, and behaviors necessary for effective leadership in all student newsrooms.

Six questions (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12) were designed to help newsroom leaders focus on specific leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors they regarded as critical to that position. It was important that the initial round of questions elicit the most comprehensive information possible in order to establish an accurate representation of the panelists' views. Answers to these open-ended questions were critical because they formed the basis for all consecutive rounds. The synthesis of panelists' responses to these six questions was returned to the experts in Rounds Two and Three for consensus building.

Question 13 asked panelists to provide input they considered important to the advancement of the understanding of the role of editor in chief, but was not specifically addressed in the first 12 questions. After careful review of the responses to Question 13, it was determined that these responses were similar to responses to other questions. As a result, where appropriate, they were included in the responses to the 7 questions returned to participants in Round Two. For example: a response from Question 13 stated: "Recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader." This response fit with responses to Question 7, which asked panelists to state competencies they lacked which they thought would have made them a more effective leader.

The data from each of the 13 questions in Round One were summarized separately. Similar or duplicate responses in each question were combined to create the final list of responses to be returned to experts in Round Two. The Round One instrument is included in Appendix D.

### Round Two Instrument

The Round Two instrument included seven questions developed from the responses to questions in Round One. The synthesis of these responses produced a list of 189 statements describing leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors. Panelists rated the responses using a Likert Scale. The Round Two questions are provided in Table 7 and the Round Two instrument is included in Appendix G.

**Table 7. Round Two Questions**

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1.	The expert panel identified the following as basic “journalism” competencies and skills an incoming editor in chief or managing editor should have. Please rate how important each ‘skill/competency’ is to that role.
2.	The expert panel identified the following as “leadership” competencies (skills) and behaviors most important to the effective execution of the role of a top newsroom leader. Please rate each ‘competency (skill)’ or ‘behavior’ as it relates to that role.
3.	The expert panel identified the following as leadership competencies they “lacked.” Please rate how critical you think the ‘lack’ of these leadership competencies are to that role.
4.	The expert panel identified the following as “experiences” that helped shape their understanding of the editor in chief leadership position. Please rate each role as it relates to the role of editor in chief.
5.	The expert panel identified the following as “unique” to the college editor in chief role (as opposed to professional leadership roles). Please rate how important these situations were to your experience with that role.
6.	The expert panel identified the following competencies, skills, and behaviors they say separate an “average” newsroom leader from a “great” newsroom leader. Please identify the degree of importance for each.
7.	The expert panel identified the following “shortfalls” as having a negative impact on the leadership success of college editors in chief. In your experience, what impact do these “shortfalls” have on the role of editor in chief? Please identify the degree of significance for each.

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### Round Three Instrument

The Round Three instrument included 12 questions. Seven of these were questions from Round Two that were returned for consensus. Panelists were asked to select the three most important of the ranked responses to each of the questions returned from Round Two. Five of the 12 questions asked for the panelists’ recommendations for the future leadership development and training of editors. The Round Three questions are provided in Table 8 and the Round Three instrument is included in Appendix H. Appendix I provides permission from the CDLR to include the electronic tools prepared by the CDLR as appendices in this dissertation.



**Table 8. Round Three Questions**

- 
1. The expert panel identified the following 10 basic journalism “skills” and 9 basic journalism “competencies” as important for an incoming editor in chief. From the list of 10 basic journalism “skills” and 9 basic journalism “competencies,” please choose three you regard as **most** important.
  2. The expert panel identified the following 15 leadership “competencies” and 10 leadership “behaviors” as important for an incoming editor in chief. From the list of 15 basic leadership “competencies” and 10 leadership “behaviors,” please choose three you regard as **most** critical.
  3. “Lack” of any of the following 8 leadership “competencies” was considered critical by the panel. From the list of 8 leadership competencies, please choose the three, the lack of which, you regard as **most** critical.
  4. The expert panel identified the following 12 leadership “experiences” as important to shaping their understanding of the editor in chief role. From the list of 12 leadership “experiences,” please choose three you regard as **most** important.
  5. The panel of experts identified 8 unique “situations” they considered most important to the college editor's leadership role (as opposed to professional editors). From the list of 8 unique “situations,” please choose three you regard as **most** important to the college editor's role.
  6. The expert panel identified the following 10 leadership “competencies,” “skills” and “behaviors” that separate an “average” newsroom leader from a “great” newsroom leader. From the list of leadership “competencies,” “skills,” and “behaviors,” please choose three you regard as **most** important to identifying a ‘great’ newsroom leader.
  7. The expert panel identified the following 11 leadership “shortfalls” as having a significant impact on the success of college editors in chief. From the list of 11 leadership “shortfalls,” please choose three you regard as **most** significant.
  8. Did you receive formal leadership training (course, seminar, workshop) before you became editor in chief? If yes, how many hours of leadership training did you receive?
  9. Did you receive leadership training during your tenure as top newsroom leader? If yes, please describe that training in the space below:
  10. During your time as a college newsroom leader, describe an individual with whom you interacted on a regular basis, who had the greatest impact on your ability to lead.
  11. If you decided to take another leadership role, explain why you would or would not seek formal leadership training?
  12. Given the short tenure of most college journalists, what is the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success?
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## Participants' Prior Perceptions and Knowledge of the Editor in Chief Role

### Leadership versus Management

The panel was instructed to read the following definitions of management and leadership (Figure 4), before answering Questions 2 through 13, which were all specific to leadership.

**Figure 4. Differences in Management and Leadership**

<b>Experts tell us there is a big difference in management and leadership. Panelists were instructed to read the following definitions before answering questions 2-13, which were specific to leadership.</b>	
<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Management responsibilities are a large part of most leaders' job descriptions. Northouse (2001) explains that the overriding function of management is to <u>provide order and consistency</u> to organizations. Kotter (1990) states that management is about <u>budgeting, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving</u> .	Northouse (2001) explains the primary function of leadership is to <u>produce change and movement</u> . Kotter (1990) states that leadership is about <u>building a vision, aligning people, communicating, motivating, inspiring, and recognizing accomplishments</u> .
Sources: Adapted from John P. Kotter, <i>A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management</i> , pp.3-7, 1990. New York :Free Press. Peter G. Northouse, <i>Leadership: Theory and Practice</i> , p. 8, 2001. Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage Publications.	

Two questions in Round One sought to discover panelists' understanding of the differences between leadership and management.

**Question 2:** *Were you aware or were you made aware of the differences in management and leadership before you became editor in chief or managing editor? (see Table 6, Question 2)*

Thirteen of the panelists indicated they were aware of the differences in management and leadership, while 11 indicated they were not aware of the differences. One panelist did not respond.

Eight of the 25 panelists offered explanations of their knowledge of management and leadership. One panelist reported she was aware of the differences in management and leadership before she was managing editor and then editor in chief at a large mid-western college daily. She stated she was aware of the differences because: “I was also editor in junior high and high school. I had also participated as an intern in four different professional newspapers.” However, one of the questions on the application for editor in chief was “Do you see yourself as a manager or a leader?” Another panelist stated: “The editor is the leader. Someone who directs the [newspaper’s] visions and ... goals.” A panelist who oversaw a staff of 40 at a mid-size public university stated:

I believe leadership is getting people to follow an organized plan. I think management is more like being a boss, which constitutes giving orders and making rules. When it comes down to it, I think people would much rather follow a leader than deal with a boss. Leaders are likeable. That’s important because you get more out of people and they are more willing to work for and with you if you are likeable.

Another panelist reported that her knowledge of leadership also came from working in a professional newsroom and watching professional journalists prior to her work on the student newspaper. These professional editors, she reported, didn’t directly teach her how to lead, but led by example. Another panelist said he was made aware of the difference during a tour of duty in the Navy. Two panelists reported they had attended a seminar or workshop that included sessions on the differences between management and leadership. One panelist cited previous work experience and several management classes as helping her to differentiate between the two roles. Only two reported that prior college newsroom leadership experience helped them gain insight into the two distinct roles.

Of the 11 panelists who reported they were not aware of the differences in management and leadership, five panelists elaborated on this lack of knowledge. One editor reported that management and leadership were touched on briefly, but not discussed as separate items, during a three-day editors’ retreat she attended before she

began her tenure as editor. Another reported she was “not at all” aware of the differences. She stated:

I always assumed that the two go hand in hand and that in the big picture they were the same. Our advisor refers to us as a management team (editor, managing editor, photo editor, yearbook editor and advertising manager) but says we are leaders. I think she sees them as one, thus making me think it is one job.

Even after being in the role of editor in chief for a year, one panelist reported she is not sure she knows the difference now. Another editor reported that she bought a book that explained the differences in detail after she became editor in chief.

Discovering whether or not college editors’ understand the differences between leadership and management was considered important because leadership experts consider both leadership and management essential to the success of organizations. Kotter (1990) explains that “leadership and management differ in terms of their primary function” (p. 7). The primary function of leadership, he points out, is to “produce useful change,” while the primary function of management is to “produce orderly results which keep something working efficiently.” Kotter (1990) states “...effective leadership coupled with competent management can produce extraordinary business success” (p. 19). Covey (in Hesselbein, et al., 1996) uses the following analogy to explain the difference in leadership and management: “Leadership makes sure the ladders we are climbing are leaning against the right wall: management makes sure we are climbing the ladders in the most efficient ways possible” (p.154). It is also important to note that Kotter and other leadership experts acknowledge that there is overlap in the two roles. Northouse (1990) states:

When managers are involved in influencing a group to meet its goals, they are involved in leadership. When leaders are involved in planning, organizing, staffing, and controlling, they are involved in management. Both processes involve influencing a group of individuals toward goal attainment. (p. 10)

However, Kotter emphasizes “leadership by itself never keeps an organization on time and on budget year after year. And management by itself never creates significant useful change” (p. 7).

A follow-up question asked panelists to indicate the importance they placed on an editor knowing the distinction between leadership and management.

**Question 3:** *How important is that distinction (in question 2) to a college newsroom leader? (see Table 6, Question 3)*

Twenty-two panelists stated they thought awareness of the distinction between management and leadership was important for a college newsroom leader. Editors, in all cases, stated that they saw both management and leadership as important aspects of top student newsroom leadership position. However, four panelists stated they did not think the distinction was important (Table 9). Editors, in all cases, stated that they saw both management and leadership as important aspects of the top student newsroom leadership position.

**Table 9. Participant Responses Indicating the Importance of Knowing the Distinction between Management and Leadership for a College Newsroom Leader**

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1. It is important for someone assuming the position of editor in chief to understand the distinction because they are required to be both.
  2. Distinguishing between leadership and management is a skill that can only be learned by experience. Though developed leadership skills are preferred when choosing a newsroom leader, most college-aged editors haven't developed strong skills by then. It is highly important, especially when working with peers, but a college newsroom leader job leaves room for learning and developing both of the skills.
  3. The distinction is very important. Managing a newsroom and the journalistic practices within comes easily to someone who knows the business. Leading a group of people to do what you want them to do, however, is difficult. If the distinction is made clear from the beginning, a student editor will likely have a better understanding of his or her role in the newsroom.
  4. This depends, in large part, on the size of one's staff. In our case—a relatively large staff—the editor's role is more about leadership: vision, motivation, inspiration, etc. However, an editor's ability to implement his or her vision is dependent on his management ability (or his ability to delegate management). An editor in chief's success can perhaps be measured by his or her ability to translate the abstractions of leadership into practice.
  5. I think the biggest difference between management and leadership can be signified by being in the office or in the newsroom. It seems to me that a good manager is one who is sitting in an office planning. A leader, by these definitions, is one who is in the newsroom encouraging and communicating directly with the staff.
  6. It's very important. In a college setting everyone being the same age is a real problem. It's hard for someone who is 20 to listen to another 20- year old and do everything he or she says. It is especially hard when a 22-year old has to take orders from a 19- or 20-year old. Being likeable and having a vision is important. People work better with someone their age they can relate to than with someone their age that comes down on them all the time. Being a leader is much more important than managing.

**Table 9. Continued**

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7. I think it depends on the situation at the paper. If there are no specific issues that need to be addressed, it is not as important a distinction, as long as the editor has a reasonable balance of both skills. A mix of leadership and good management can help a good paper become better. However, if there are specific problems, the distinction becomes more important. Last year, our newspaper needed a lot of change in the attitude of editors toward getting work done on time, and the paper was undergoing some major design changes. It took leadership more than management to move us to the point where we were getting everything in on time as well as to implement the changes that go along with conversion from tabloid to broadsheet format. At times, it seemed like the editor in chief moved us forward by sheer will (and screaming). This year however, because the pieces were in place, management has been needed more than in the past, because although the basics were there, a lot of small things needed to be adjusted and monitored in order to get the paper into good shape.
  8. Very important distinction. You want a leader not a care-taker.
  9. I don't feel that the distinction between the two is nearly as important as realizing that each of these aspects of the position of managing editor (or editor in chief) exist. Generally, they are never so obviously separate, in practice, as such a partition would suggest. One must be a manager and a leader, whether editor in chief or managing editor; distinguishing the two roles so blatantly would only suggest that one should only have one responsibility or the other.
  10. Critical, especially given that student journalists are just that: both students and journalists. If a college editor fails to fulfill his role as a leader in the newsroom—constantly setting achievable goals and motivating the staff to reach them—the staff's energy will go toward classes and not the copy, editing and design. The result being a lifeless paper that is a joke in the community.
  11. When dealing with positions like editor in chief or managing editor I always assumed that both were important and shouldn't be separated.
  12. In my experience, college journalists would benefit from knowing more about the distinction. I think one of the hardest things for them to learn, especially if they have limited experience in the work world, is that most of the time your editor will be a manager. Real leadership, I've found, only becomes apparent in rare circumstances (newsroom crises, major projects).
  13. Realizing the differences helps you to better perform the two roles. It relieves stress and you realize that you have to perform to equally important yet inherently different major duties.
  14. It's important to know when you're doing one and when you're doing the other. Both skills are necessary, but to think that you're being a good leader by only making sure the operation runs smoothly would be misguided.
  15. The distinction is not incredibly important, but the ability to both manage and lead is vital. As an editor, you are responsible for both the content of your paper—words, images, ads—and the people who work with you. You must be able to manage the office so things can operate effectively, but also lead the people to make the final product the best it can be.
  16. Management is 110 percent important because without any sort of order on the newspaper—everything is thrown into disarray. Management should be completely on the back of the editor. The editor should be responsible for coordinating staff meetings with both writers/editors and photographers. The editor is one person I would expect to be around the newsroom 5 or 7 days a week so they can be reached. If not, they can be reached at home. Or, at least, the editor should make certain that if staff writers/photographers need help—they should have them contact page editors.

**Table 9. Continued**

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17. I think that a distinction is probably very important, but honestly, I never thought about it until the difference was pointed out. I think it may help with the stress level of the job. A lot of times I find myself wanting to be a role model for those on staff ... but at the same time I cannot do the simple things like problem solving alone. I am always second guessing myself and using other high ranking staff members as a crutch when I cannot make a decision on my own. Sometimes it is also difficult because you end up becoming friends with those on staff, and it makes it hard to manage them when control or organization or punishment is in order. I think it is important to know when it is time to be a manager and when it is time to be a leader.
  18. I don't think that the distinction is as important as the ability to balance the two. A leader needs to inspire just as a manager needs to get effective work out of the people managed. So, if a manager can play the role of both a manager and leader, it creates a positive work environment.
  19. My perspective might be skewed because my university is a small school; my staff consisted of six core staffers and five or six contributing writers. As editor I had to cover all the bases. I created the production schedule and the budget. I designed the layout and assigned the stories. I was the management and leadership. I don't think the paper would have been as successful had I not been able to fulfill both descriptions. So in my situation, the distinction was not important.
  20. I think at the bare minimum you need a skilled manager. Without order a paper just won't work. But only when you find someone with both skills will a newspaper advance, and as we begin choosing a new editor that is a factor we are most considering.
  21. Very. Especially in college I think it's important to get people motivated to want to get involved. They don't know what benefits they will receive from doing the work and how rewarding it can be unless they are told and inspired by someone to do so.
  22. It's very important. If the editor was not the leader, I think the staff would be unfulfilled and unsatisfied, lacking purpose.
  23. It is even more important than in other situations outside a college campus. Student journalists need to be motivated, inspired and recognized for their accomplishments even more because in most situations they are not getting paid much or not getting paid at all. Student managers need to motivate their staffs in order to retain a good staff. However, aside from that, managers must take on their management roles to keep the publication operations running smoothly and control what sometimes may lead to an out of control situation when all employees are college students.
  24. It is very important. A newsroom needs organization in order to survive, and therefore needs a manager who can create a system people can easily follow. And a newsroom needs a leader. There are so many different jobs within a newsroom and staff members need someone who can bring them all together in a way that makes sense and gets the job done effectively. People will work together if they are working with someone they can look up to—a good leader.
  25. There is a very thin line between management and leadership for a college newsroom leader. Leaders all have different styles/ways of managing, but a newsroom leader must have exceptional skills in both areas.
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Several panelists' replies demonstrated they were confused about the differences in management and leadership even though definitions of the two functions were provided for them. Table 10 illustrates this confusion.

Whether or not panelists have a clear understanding of the differences in leadership and management, they place a high value on many of the skills experts say are specific to effective leadership and describe them as critical to success in the college newsroom. For example, many state that “motivation” or “the ability to inspire” the staff is important because the staff is often unpaid and many staff members are not journalism majors and may not be planning to pursue a journalism career. They indicate that it is the

**Table 10. Panelists’ Responses Demonstrating Their Confusion between Management and Leadership**

<b>Panelists’ Comments</b>	<b>Analysis of Panelists’ Comments</b>
As editor I had to cover all the bases. I created the production schedule and the budget. I designed the layout and assigned the stories. I was the management and leadership. I don’t think the paper would have been as successful had I not been able to fulfill both descriptions.	The editor states she was the management and the leadership, yet the examples she cites all deal with management.
There is a very thin line between management and leadership for a college newsroom leader. Leaders all have different styles/ways of managing, but a newsroom leader must have exceptional skills in both areas.	Leadership experts (Kotter 1990), (Northouse 2001) tell us there is a distinct difference in management and leadership. The differences were provided for panelists.
I don’t feel that the distinction between the two is nearly as important as realizing that each of these aspects of the position of managing editor (or editor in chief) exist. Generally, they are never so obviously separate, in practice, as such a partition would suggest.	Leadership experts (Kotter 1990), (Northouse 2001) tell us there is a distinct difference in management and leadership. The differences were provided for panelists.
Management is 110 percent important because without any sort of order on the newspaper—everything is thrown into disarray. Management should be completely on the back of the editor. The editor should be responsible for coordinating staff meetings with both writers/editors and photographers. Organize the storyboards for current and future issues. The editor is one person whom I would expect to be around the newsroom 5 or 7 days a week so they can be reached. If not, they can be reached at home. Or at least, the editor should make certain that if staff writers/photographers need help—they should have them contact their page editors of whom he/she is turning the story in for.	Although he states he was aware of the differences in management and leadership before taking the job of editor in chief, he describes the role in management terms only.



**Table 10. Continued**

<b>Panelists' Comments</b>	<b>Analysis of Panelists' Comments</b>
College journalists would benefit from knowing more about the distinction. I think one of the hardest things for them to learn...is that most of the time your editor will be a manager. Real leadership, I've found, only becomes apparent in rare circumstances (newsroom crises, major projects).	He states he was not aware of the differences before "in the form of academic definitions" but thinks the distinctions are important to college newsroom leaders. However, he describes "real leadership" as "newsroom crisis or major projects." Both are management by academic definitions.
This depends, in large part, on the size of one's staff. In our case—a relatively large staff—the editor's role is more about leadership: vision, motivation, inspiration, etc. However, an editor's ability to implement his or her vision is dependent on his management ability (or his ability to delegate management.) An editor in chief's success can perhaps be measured by his or her ability to translate the abstractions of leadership into practice.	Kotter (1990) explains: "People who think of management as being only the implementation part of leadership ignore the fact that leadership has its own implementation process: aligning people to new directions and then inspiring them to make it happen. Similarly, people who think of leadership as only part of the implementation aspect of management (the motivational part) ignore the direction-setting aspect of leadership" (p.5).

leader's ability to motivate or inspire his or her staff that enables the leader to secure the support of peers in embracing the leader's vision, reach goals, and make a worthy final product.

One panelist described her tenure in the top newsroom position as her "reign as editor in chief," which would imply an authoritarian approach to leadership. However, she went on to described her role as "confirming the newspaper's purpose, keeping the staff focused, keeping the staff on deadline, and providing guidance" explaining the role of editor in chief as the "sanity" of the staff. Despite her understanding of at least some of the functions of leadership, her reference to her tenure as "her reign" may indicate that the authoritarian attitude associated with management and control is still evident in this newsroom. It may simply mean that the language of the outdated authoritarian model has remained, even though a more balanced approach of leadership and management is actually practiced.

In addition to the confusion panelists indicated concerning the differences in management and leadership, they also indicated having numerous prior misconceptions concerning the top leadership role.

### **Misconceptions Concerning the Top College Newspaper Leadership Role**

Although all 25 panelists reported previous newsroom experience, and in 22 cases leadership experience, panelists reported a high number of misconceptions concerning the top newsroom leadership position prior to entering that position.

***Question 8:*** *Before entering the role, what was your biggest misconception about the leadership role of editor in chief or managing editor? (See Table 6, Question 8)*

These misconceptions were divided into five categories: misconceptions about leadership competencies, misconceptions about commitment, misconceptions about management, misconceptions concerning staff, and misconceptions concerning support from the college/university community as shown in Table 11. The examples given by panelists were divided into categories to facilitate analysis. Some of the examples may be relevant to more than one category.

Although the panel cited more examples of misconceptions about leadership competencies than any other misconceptions, misconceptions about commitment are discussed first because understanding commitment is critical to leadership (Kouzes and Posner, 1997). It is a prerequisite that should serve as a guide to developing the leadership competencies necessary to succeed in that role.

**Table 11. Misconceptions Editors Had Concerning the Top Leadership Role Before Assuming That Position**

<b>Misconceptions Concerning Leadership Competencies</b>	
1.	I didn't understand the extent to which the editor has to be a leader along with all the other duties
2.	Looked at the editor in chief more as the highest copy editor rather than a leader
3.	Thought I just needed to be able to write proficiently and know grammar and style rules
4.	I found it easy to come up with a vision; not so with getting others to buy in
5.	Thought the respect would come with job (title). Difficulty of earning staff members' respect
6.	Recognizing how important leadership skills would be and how much of a difference they would make
7.	I thought they were all-knowing, but even the editor in chief makes mistakes
8.	I think I had it in my head that the editor was this all-knowing being that could do no wrong
9.	Thought it would be a thankless task. However, it has been immensely gratifying; stressful but worth it

**Table 11. Continued**

<b>Misconceptions about Commitment (magnitude of responsibility)</b>	
1.	The long hours and amount of patience required are not as easy as it looks or sounds
2.	Thought the role would be easier
3.	That it was a part-time job
4.	It's hard work
5.	The job is way more involved and taxing than the stipend or recognition covers
6.	I knew it wasn't an easy task, but I didn't know it would be so stressful
7.	High level of responsibility required
<b>Misconceptions about Management</b>	
1.	It would be easier to delegate
2.	Could not and should not attempt to do everything myself
3.	Degree to which I would deal with difficult people on a daily basis (staff, readership)
4.	Job was more about managing people, than editing or writing
5.	Thought management would be easier
<b>Misconceptions Concerning Staff</b>	
1.	Thought that people would do their jobs
2.	The belief that no one would leave me hanging
3.	Thought the staff would know the basic rules of journalism
4.	Staff would know how to write effective news stories
5.	How much effort it takes, especially in a volunteer organization (volunteer attitude, not committed)
<b>Misconceptions Concerning Support from the College/University Community</b>	
1.	Professors and administrators would want to help the newspaper
2.	Students and faculty do not understand the work and responsibility of producing a newspaper
3.	Negative comments of faculty and students (after only getting 2 hours of sleep) hurts a lot

*Misconceptions about Commitment (Magnitude of Responsibility)*

Despite the panel members level of leadership experience, they still reported being surprised by the amount and level of responsibility associated with the top leadership role. Even those who had served as managing editor, and worked side by side with the editor in chief, stated they were surprised by the impact of having the ultimate responsibility. One expert who rose through the ranks from reporter, news editor, and managing editor, to editor in chief of a daily newspaper responded:

After serving as managing editor, I thought the transition into the editor in chief position would be an easy one. But I soon learned that even though I had been performing the same literal actions as the editor in chief, that the higher level of responsibility was definitely present as chief.

Another editor with seven years experience, including assistant editor, said he was surprised the top leadership role required so much time.

It is, in fact, a full-time job! You have to spend practically every day there or at least be on top of things all the time...they (editors in chief) are going to be there almost as much as in a real job or for that matter studying.

An editor with three years experience, one of which was as managing editor, reported the job was not as easy as it “looked or sounded” offering “long hours and “plenty of patience” as examples. One panelist with only one and a half years of experience, although one was as managing editor, provided a similar response: “I knew it wasn’t an easy task, but I didn’t know it would be so stressful.” A panelist with more than two years experience, one as assistant editor, described her experience as the editor in chief as “way more involved and taxing than the stipend or recognition covered.”

One panelist who went directly from reporter to editor in chief of a weekly newspaper reported being unaware of the amount and level of responsibility associated with the top leadership role. She stated: “Just how much responsibility an editor has really surprised me—I alone am responsible for everything regarding the newspaper.” It is more understandable that a student whose experience was limited to reporting and writing would not understand or comprehend the extent of the responsibilities of the top leadership role.

Finally, one editor in chief of a daily stated the role of managing editor had prepared him for the top leadership role because he had “worked closely” with the previous editor. However, he stated before becoming managing editor he “thought the position was just putting the paper out on deadline every night.” Being managing editor, he stated, helped him understand what he called the “behind the scenes” work editors do.

### *Misconceptions Concerning Leadership Competencies*

Panelists gave more examples of misconceptions concerning leadership competencies than any other category of misconceptions. Panelists recognized the leader's need for proficiency in journalism and management skills, but reported underestimating the extent to which leadership competencies and skills would affect their

success in the top newsroom position. Panelists also reported encountering problems with the authoritarian leadership approach, the ability to earn respect, the ability to motivate, inspire, and communicate a vision to the staff. What many of them lack is the experience with, or the exposure to, others who model the behaviors that, experts' state, enable leaders to inspire or motivate others.

Some of the panelists' responses indicated that prior to taking the role of editor in chief they thought their journalism skills, such as reporting, writing, and editing, would be sufficient to help them succeed as leaders. While Kouzes and Posner (1995) explain that technical or functional competence is important for a leader, it is only one aspect of leadership and, it alone, is insufficient for effective leadership. They state "Expertise in leadership skills themselves is another dimension of competence. And the abilities to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage must be demonstrated as well, if a leader is to be seen as capable" (p. 25).

An editor of a weekly who supervised 40 staff members stated,  
Very early on I just looked at the editor in chief more as the highest copy editor than anything. I knew there were a number of other responsibilities but I didn't understand the extent to which the editor does have to be a leader in addition to all of the other duties.

Another panelist of a monthly publication who supervised a staff of 16 agreed, stating:

I thought I just needed to be able to write proficiently and know grammar and style rules. Little did I know that being an editor is so much more than that! I wrote very little as editor—I was lucky to squeeze out an editorial before deadline. My job was more about managing people than anything else.

In their responses to other questions, panelists cited competencies and skills they "most admired" in leaders they had served under. However, after assuming the role themselves, these competencies and skills were also ones they identified as having difficulty emulating.

They either did not translate those competencies or skills into ones they too would need when they became the top leader, were unable to develop those skills, or

they thought the skills would come with the title. Some panelists implied they thought the title would bring with it a certain amount of power. That attitude corresponds to the authoritarian leadership or “benevolent dictatorship” model common to some college and professional newsrooms. Leadership expert Jay Conger states: “In the old days, the boss would rely on authority and formal management, request it, and trust that those who hoped to move up would see that it got done” (Conger, in Burkett, 2001, p. 11). Conger also emphasizes that authority and formal management are no longer effective with most young people today. Evidence of this is found in the following response from a former editor in chief with two and a half years of experience, including news editor of a college daily, who stated: “I just thought the respect would come, I suppose, which was wrong. Earning people’s respect as a leader was more difficult than I thought it would be.” Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that “titles are granted, but it’s your behavior that wins you respect (p. 12).” Her position did not appear to be one of arrogance, but rather ignorance of the leadership skill it took to earn and keep a follower’s respect. Once she realized the situation she took steps to educate herself. She stated: “I studied books to train myself on leadership skills.”

Although each panelist recalled “leadership deficiencies” in editors they served under, some panelists reported they still thought of the top editor as someone who was “all-knowing.”

One panelist whose experience was limited to reporting when he took the top leadership position stated:

I think the editor before me had a bit of a God complex. He was never wrong and made people believe he never was. I think I had it in my head that the editor was this all-knowing being who could do no wrong. That’s just silly.

Although this panelist began his tenure as editor with no previous newsroom leadership experience, he had more than four years experience as a reporter. Another panelist agreed: “Being editor does not make one a god, and there are many people in college who are convinced they are leaders when they are not.” A panelist with seven years experience, including several leadership positions before taking the top leadership position, stated: “I thought they [editors in chief] were all-knowing. But, we all make

mistakes and that is O.K. as long as you learn from them.” While these editors agree that it is unreasonable to expect leaders to be infallible, they do appear to think they should strive to earn the staff’s respect, and admit to, and learn from mistakes. Another editor emphasized: “It is important to simply recognize that a great leader isn’t just born. It doesn’t just happen. It takes training and sometimes failing [in order] to succeed as a leader.”

Panelists who understood the importance of newsroom leaders at all levels having good leadership skills seemed to have a more positive outlook concerning their roles. One panelist who plans to take the role of editor in chief next year, and served as managing editor at the time of the study, explained:

I never thought of the managing editor position being a large “leadership” role at all. I thought of it more as a management position (considering the editor in chief the sole leader) not recognizing how important leadership skills would be and how much of a difference they would make.

Another panelist who was editor in chief of a weekly newspaper and managed a staff of 25 stated:

My biggest misconception was that the job is largely a thankless task. It has been immensely gratifying to see a good newspaper become better, largely due to the efforts of the section editors, but also because of effective leadership on the parts of both the managing editor and myself. The staffers do seem to appreciate the difficulty of the job (so much so that no one applied for the position next semester, leaving me with another term in office, as it were). Leading the paper has been stressful, but worth it.

A panelist from a large private university daily, who managed a staff of 125, reported that he found it difficult to motivate his staff. He lamented the difficulties of dealing with a mostly “volunteer organization,” a common problem with college newspaper staffs. He stated: “I found it easy to come up with a vision; not so easy getting others to buy in to my vision.” However, Kouzes and Posner (1997) explain that good leaders in a paid workforce do not get people to buy into their visions with monetary rewards or force associated with management. A leader’s ability to inspire people to

share or buy into his or her vision is a leadership skill these experts define as “The art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations (p.30).” Kouzes and Posner also state, “to get a true feel for the essence of leadership, assume that everyone who works for you is a volunteer (p.31).” They emphasize that leadership is about inspiring others to do something because they want to do it, not because they have to do it. Kouzes and Posner further state that “there are monumental differences between enlisting support and giving orders, between gaining commitment and commanding obedience. Leaders sustain the requisite credibility by their actions—by challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging” (p.31).

These panelists cite experience with traditional management where workers are motivated by the use of incentives such as promotions or bonuses, or by the threat of dismissal. They also understand the need to enlist support and gain commitment in a volunteer organization.

### *Misconceptions about Management*

Kotter (1990) explains the primary function of management is to create orderly results that keep an organization working efficiently. He also states that “it is generally accepted today that management can largely be taught to adults either in school or on the job (p. 103).” This panel of experts indicated that management skills, including controlling, problem solving, and delegating responsibility were a crucial part of their responsibility and success in the top newsroom leadership position. One editor from a daily stated that her previous experience as managing editor had helped train her for the skills she would need as editor in chief. She stated:

My biggest misconception as managing editor was the ease of management. I was rudely awakened when the editor in chief and I had to fire the night desk editor. My experience as managing editor prepared me more than I realized for editor in chief. My biggest misconception about editor in chief was the number of difficult people an editor must deal with in a day.



So although she had experience dealing with personnel problems when she began her tenure as editor in chief, she was surprised that this was a daily occurrence when she took over the top position.

Respondents went into the greatest detail about their experiences in relation to delegating responsibilities to peers in the newsroom. One panelist with three years experience, including managing editor, expressed frustration over her inability to entrust her staff to complete assigned tasks in a timely manner. She stated:

I believed that it would be easier to delegate and tell people what to do and to teach them...now I work by what others do which gets frustrating. I thought that people would do their jobs like they are told. I get aggravated when they do not do their work on time because then I cannot do mine.

Although there is agreement among panelists about the significant role the ability to delegate plays in the management of the student newsroom, there is a sharp contrast in the outcomes for those who attempt to develop this critical management skill. One top newsroom leader who had served in four staff positions, including sports editor and managing editor reported: “After holding the position (editor in chief) for some time, I realized that I could not, and should not, attempt to do everything myself.”

The most positive attitude and results concerning the ability of leaders to delegate work were reported by an editor of a daily who stated:

My biggest learning experience this semester has been in my interaction with other managers and leaders at the paper. Through many opportunities, I have learned when I need to step up myself, and take on extra work or help someone finish their job. I have also learned when to delegate a task to another staff member, and allow them to do the work. Doing this, I have learned, is a great way to show trust in coworkers. Knowing when to delegate and when to put the effort on my own shoulders is something I can carry into future leadership opportunities.

This editor did learn a key management skill while on the job and offered at least some insight to future editors about one way to teach that behavior—he modeled the behavior he wanted to see.

### *Misconceptions Concerning Staff*

While top newsroom leaders reported being surprised by the magnitude of the responsibilities and level of commitment expected of them by the staff and others, they reported being equally surprised by the lack of commitment on the part of many staff members. Panelists, even those with three or more years of leadership experience, reported their disappointment with staff members who do not honor their commitments to the newspaper. Although most college newspaper staffs are largely volunteer, some editors in chief said they assumed their staffs would be dedicated as well as competent. They admit this was not often the case, especially when dealing with an unpaid staff. A former editor with four years experience at a large private university daily, stated: “My biggest misconception was how much effort it takes, especially in a volunteer organization, to have staff members follow your advice and carry out your ideas.” Another panelist with three years experience, two in top leadership positions, who had similar frustrations with the “volunteer attitude” stated: “I thought that people cared about their jobs just as much as I did. I relied on the belief that no one would leave me hanging; I was wrong.” Another panelist, also with three years experience, stated: “I thought that people would do their jobs like they were told. I get aggravated when they do not do their work on time because then I cannot do mine.”

One panelist said her biggest misconception about her leadership role as an incoming editor in chief was that her small staff of 11-15 of a monthly community college newspaper would exhibit a higher level of competence in journalism. She stated: “I thought most of the people on my staff would know how to write effective news stories, headlines, and know the basic rules of journalism. I had to teach the majority of my staff these things.”

### *Misconceptions Concerning Support from the College/University Community*

Two panelists reported disappointment in the amount of criticism, as well as the lack of support, the campus newspaper received from students, faculty, and administration. They appeared to interpret this as insensitive behavior arising from a lack of awareness of the hard work involved with publishing a student newspaper and as somewhat “thankless” in light of the staff’s contribution.

They each had several years of experience and should have been aware of the campus community's attitude concerning the newspaper. They were, none-the-less, disappointed. This sensitivity may have been heightened when they became editor in chief and felt a greater personal responsibility concerning the newspaper. One editor in chief with four years experience in several newsroom leadership roles before assuming the top position reported:

I think that I just assumed that everyone in the faculty would want to help the newspaper. Instead, I was met with professors and administrators who didn't want to take a proactive role. I was surprised at the amount of criticism the paper got as opposed to the amount of help offered.

Another editor with three years experience, including that of managing editor on a weekly newspaper, reported:

The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation time making changes to make the next semester even better. Students and faculty members on the campus do not understand this, and to hear their negative comments, after only getting two hours of sleep, just hurts a lot.

### Research Question One

Research Question One asked: What are the most significant leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs student editors say are necessary to be successful in the role of editor in chief? This question was addressed in Rounds One, Two, and Three. Round One questions 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11 address research question one. Replies to these questions were returned for consensus building in questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Rounds Two and Three.

### Identified Journalism Competencies

*Question 1: As a rule, what basic journalism competencies should an incoming editor in chief or managing editor have? (Table 6, Question 1)*

In the initial round, the expert panelists identified certain basic journalism competencies and skills as critical to the success of the top leadership position. The results were returned to the experts in Rounds Two and Three for consensus building. As previously stated these skills are not specific to leadership, but they are considered important because most leaders need “functional competence” in their field to be effective. For the purposes of this study, and in keeping with Kouzes and Posner's definition of leadership competency, journalism competency was treated as one dimension of leadership competency. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state they are “noticing a trend toward requiring more technical competence of leaders” (p. 25). This may be especially true in the college newsroom culture where it is necessary for newsroom leaders to be peer teachers (Harvey, 2002).

The experts were not limited in the number of competencies they reported. The panelists included both skills and competencies in their responses. Journalism competencies, for the purpose of this study, are defined as having “knowledge based on education and/or experience and having requisite or adequate expertise.” Skills are defined as “a learned power and/or dexterity.”

The expert panel identified 24 basic journalism skills and competencies an incoming editor in chief or managing editor should have to be successful in that role. There was widespread reporting of most or all of the 12 skills and 12 competencies experts identified in this study (Table 12).

**Table 12. Journalism Skills and Competencies Identified by Panelists as Important for Incoming Editor in Chief**

<b>Basic Journalism Skills</b>	
1.	Copy editing skills
2.	Basic reporting skills
3.	Writing skills
4.	AP Style
5.	Headline writing
6.	Photography skills
7.	Computer trouble-shooting skills
8.	How to write leads
9.	Design and layout
10.	Grammar
11.	Mastery of computer software (Quark XPress, Pagemaker, Photoshop)
12.	Mastery of basic news story structures
<b>Basic Journalism Competencies</b>	
1.	Knowledge of production process
2.	Reporting experience
3.	Understand journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance
4.	Understand importance news judgement
5.	Understanding readership
6.	Knowledge of journalistic ethical standards
7.	Knowledge of media law
8.	One year college newspaper experience
9.	Newspaper internship
10.	Basic understanding of advertising
11.	Journalism background
12.	Knowledge of photojournalism (graphic and legal points concerning images)

Editors often cited teaching or coaching new and existing staff members as one of their primary leadership roles. Since participation on many student newspapers does not require prior newspaper experience or a major in journalism, many staff members rely on editors to help them develop basic journalism skills through on-the-job training. In order to facilitate this training, it is important for the leader to be competent in basic journalism skills. College newspapers have a rapid turnover in staff creating a constant demand for training new staff members. The on-the-job training of staff members is usually the responsibility of editors. Depending on the size of the newspaper, the job of training can

be a major role for the editor in chief. Harvey (2002) discussed the importance of peer teaching within the college newsroom setting. One former editor in chief reported:

Ideally, he or she should be able to perform the tasks of every member of the staff (from staff writer to copy desk chief). Often this is not possible, but with a widespread and vast knowledge a top editor can more effectively manage and lead the newspaper staff.

Another panelist reported, “Any senior editor, especially the editor in chief, should have mastered the art of news writing and reporting.” Another panelist from a college daily, who also had newspaper internship experience, stated: “Newspaper journalists tend to either be writers or copy editors. I have watched editors in chief come from both sides. The most effective editors have had experience in both, and understand all of the steps to creating a newspaper.” Another skill that experts reported as a basic journalism skill was computer trouble-shooting and mastery of computer software. One expert echoed the sentiments of most other panelists, “After all, it’s the editor who will have to fix things when they don’t work.”

Additional journalism skills and competencies frequently cited by editors included sound news judgement, knowledge of ethical standards, and understanding fairness, accuracy, and balance. One editor responded: “Most importantly, an editor or managing editor must be able to make sound news judgments.” Another editor stated:

Any senior editor, especially the editor in chief, should have mastered the art of news writing...the important skills include writing leads and prioritizing facts. Of course, journalism competency includes ethics in reporting, making sure all sides of a story are told, fairness in quoting, etc.

Another panelist stated the following as competencies necessary for an editor in chief: “As far as basic journalism competencies, an incoming editor should have a very good understanding of fairness and accuracy. I think that these are the two main things when dealing with a university and members of your staff. She added that “a good background in writing and editing” are critical.

The list of 12 journalism skills and 12 journalism competencies identified by the experts were returned to the panelists in Round Two. Panelists were asked to rate how

important each skill and competency was to the role using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from least important to most important. The results are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13. Journalism Skills and Competencies Rated by Panel Members**

The expert panel identified the following as basic “journalism” competencies and skills an incoming editor in chief or managing editor should have. (Table 7, Question 1)

<b>Journalism Skills</b>	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Mastery of basic news story structures	3.83	0.38	1
Grammar skills	3.50	0.59	2
Copy editing skills	3.50	0.59	3
Writing skills	3.42	0.72	4
Reporting skills	3.42	0.58	5
How to write leads	3.29	0.62	6
AP Style	3.29	0.69	7
Design and layout	3.17	0.64	8
Mastery of computer software (QuarkXPress, Photoshop)	3.08	0.88	9
Headline writing	2.96	0.62	10
Computer trouble-shooting skills	2.38	1.01	11
Photography skills	2.13	0.74	12
<b>Journalism Competencies</b>	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance	3.92	0.28	1
Knowledge of ethical standards in journalism	3.83	0.49	2
Understands importance of news judgments	3.79	0.41	3
Knowledge of production process	3.63	0.58	4
Understands readership	3.54	0.51	5
Knowledge of media law	3.39	0.66	6
Reporting experience	3.13	0.45	7
One year college newspaper experience	3.08	0.65	8
Journalism background	3.00	0.93	9
Knowledge of photojournalism (graphic and legal points concerning images)	2.75	0.68	10
Basic understanding of advertising	2.46	0.72	11
Newspaper internship	2.33	0.87	12

Panelists’ responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 2.96 or higher for journalism skills and 3.0 or higher for journalism competencies were returned for consensus building. A different cutoff point was used for skills and competencies,

however, at least 75 percent of all items were returned to panelists for consensus. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics.

The list of 10 journalism skills and 9 journalism competencies, rated as important by the experts, were returned to the panelists in Round Three. Panelists were asked to select the three most important skills and three most important competencies. The results are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14. Journalism Skills and Competencies Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel identified the following 10 basic journalism “skills” and 9 basic journalism “competencies” as important for an incoming editor in chief. (Table 8, Question 1)

<b>Journalism Skills</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Mastery of basic news story structures	15	1
Reporting skills	14	2
Writing skills	9	3
Copy editing skills	8	4
Design and layout	7	5
AP Style	7	6
Mastery of computer software (QuarkXPress, Photoshop)	4	7
Ability to write leads	2	8
Grammar skills	2	9
Headline writing	1	10
<b>Journalism Competencies</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance	19	1
Knowledge of ethical standards in journalism	15	2
Understands importance of news judgment	13	3
Knowledge of production process	7	4
Understands readership	5	5
Journalism background	4	6
Reporting experience	3	7
Knowledge of media law	3	8
One year college newspaper experience	0	9



The panelists indicated that when forced to choose three from a list of 10 journalism skills necessary for a top newsroom leader's success, "mastery of basic news story structures" (15) and "reporting skills" (14) led the list. These skills were ranked higher than "writing" (9) or "copy editing skills" (8). Although these skills, along with six others received a lower ranking, they none-the-less received a high enough rating to be considered among the top 10 skills. The list, which also includes "design and layout" (7), "AP Style" (7), "mastery of computer software" (4), "lead writing" (2), and "grammar skills" (2) reflects the wide range of journalism skills panelists regard as important to their jobs.

When asked to choose three journalism competencies from a list of nine they considered most important to the role of top newsroom leader, almost 83 percent choose "understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy" as one of the three most important. Also ranked high were "knowledge of ethical standards in journalism" with a score of 65 percent, and "understands importance of news judgment" with a score of 57 percent. The high score these top three competencies received reflect the importance these panelists place on the necessity of having high standards for this leadership role.

### **Identified Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors**

In the initial round, the expert panelists were asked to identify basic leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors critical to the success of the top leadership position. The results were returned to the experts in Rounds Two and Three for consensus building.

***Question 6:*** *In your expert opinion, what leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors do you think are most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief? (Table 6, Question 6)*

Panelists were not limited in the number of items they reported. Although journalism competencies and skills were easily distinguished and were reported separately, that distinction for leadership characteristics was sometimes ambiguous. For this reason leadership competencies and skills were treated as one category (competency/skill) when they were returned to panelists in Round Two.

Leadership competencies and/or skills, for the purpose of this study, are defined as having “knowledge based on education and/or experience and having requisite or adequate expertise” or “a learned power and/or dexterity.” Behaviors are defined as “manner of conducting oneself or response to environment.”

The expert panel identified 27 leadership competencies and/or skills and 31 behaviors an incoming editor in chief or managing editor should have to be successful. There was widespread reporting of most of the 27 competencies and/or skills (Table 15) and 31 behaviors (Table 16). In order to insure the most accurate representation of panelists’ replies, the panelists’ actual wording was used in compiling the list.

A total of 58 leadership competencies and/or skills and behaviors were returned for consensus building in Round Two.

**Table 15. Leadership Competencies and/or Skills Identified by Top College Newspaper Leaders**

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Members of the expert panel identified the following 27 examples as leadership competencies (skills) most important to the effective execution of the role of a top newsroom leader.

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1. Ability to reward and reprimand
2. A preparedness for ethical situations
3. Knowledge of media law
4. Demonstrates journalism competencies
5. Ability and willingness to educate your staff
6. Ability to communicate
7. Ability to set goals
8. Ability to build a team
9. Ability to identify the paper’s strengths and weaknesses
10. Ability to make tough decisions (independent)
11. Ability to gain your fellow worker’s respect
12. Expect results from staff
13. Separating people from problems
14. In touch with the student community
15. Organized
16. Preparedness
17. Understand the staff also has classes and a life outside the paper
18. Secure enough to give and receive critiques
19. Leads by example
20. Accessibility
21. Ability to learn from and admit mistakes
22. Ability to listen to staff
23. Participates in workshops, conferences, and courses to develop skills
24. Ability to motivate
25. Experience holding other newsroom positions

**Table 15. Continued**

- 
- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 26. | Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders |
| 27. | Ability to delegate                                |
- 

**Table 16. Leadership Behaviors Identified by Top College Newspaper Leaders**


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Members of the expert panel identified the following 31 examples as leadership behaviors most important to the effective execution of the role of a top newsroom leader.

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- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1.  | Open minded  |
| 2.  | Creative   |
| 3.  | Mature   |
| 4.  | Courageous   |
| 5.  | Decisive   |
| 6.  | Unflappable, excellent anger management (mature) (self controlled) |
| 7.  | Patient  |
| 8.  | Dedication to the paper and staff (loyal)                          |
| 9.  | Fair   |
| 10. | Exhibit positive attitude  |
| 11. | Determined   |
| 12. | Long-term vision   |
| 13. | Inspiring  |
| 14. | Honesty  |
| 15. | Straightforward  |
| 16. | Trusting   |
| 17. | Tolerant   |
| 18. | Enthusiastic   |
| 19. | Consistent   |
| 20. | Motivated  |
| 21. | Dependable   |
| 22. | Prompt (dependable)  |
| 23. | Firm   |
| 24. | Flexible (cooperative)   |
| 25. | Intelligent  |
| 26. | Self-confident   |
| 27. | A passion to improve and develop newspaper                         |
| 28. | Nurturing  |
| 29. | Supportive   |
| 30. | Compassion   |
| 31. | Sense of humor   |
-

While the panel identified 58 competencies that are clearly specific to leadership in their answers to this question concerning leadership competencies, they also listed 30 competencies that were specific to management or journalism. These competencies are listed in Tables 17 and 18.

Although most panelists indicated they understood the differences between leadership and management skills, they none-the-less cited 16 competencies that are specific to management in their replies to leadership skills. Leadership experts agree that “although there are clear differences between management and leadership, or managers and leaders, there is also considerable overlap” (Yukl 1989 in Northouse 2001, p. 10). Panelists indicate they rely on management skills in the daily execution of their jobs as leaders. The management skills that panelists cited are listed in Table 17. They were not included in the list returned to panelists for consensus.

**Table 17. Management Skills Misidentified as Leadership Skills**

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Management skills misidentified by panelists as “leadership” competencies necessary for effective execution of the role of editor in chief.\*

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1. “Ability to mediate disputes and step in when things are getting rocky”
  2. “Problem solver” (“Problem solving”)
  3. “Good public speaking ability”
  4. “Very skilled time manager”
  5. “Basic managerial skills”
  6. “Ability to get people to change bad habits without pissing them off”
  7. “I think the most important leadership skill is the ability to handle major concerns skillfully, especially when presented with harsh criticism”
  8. “Delegation of tasks”
  9. “The ability to know when to delegate”
  10. “An editor needs to be organized” (“organized”) (“organization”) (“order”)
  11. “Strict on deadlines and tasks”
  12. “Common sense”
  13. “Planning”
  14. “Consistency”
  15. “Controlling”
  16. “Rewarding and reprimanding”
- 

\* The list contains panelists’ verbatim responses

Also, in identifying leadership competencies, panelists gave 14 examples of functional competencies—competencies that are specific to the journalism craft (Table 18). They listed these examples, in spite of the fact that journalism competencies were addressed in question 1 and a definition of leadership was provided before they answered this question.

While these journalism competencies were not returned for consensus in this question, the term “demonstrates journalism competencies” was included in the list of leadership competencies returned to panelists for consensus. For the purposes of this study, and in keeping with Kouzes and Posner's definition of leadership competency, journalism competency was treated as one dimension of leadership competency and was addressed in question 1, where functional competencies were returned for consensus.

**Table 18. Journalism Competencies/Skills Misidentified as Leadership Competencies/Skills**

Journalism competencies/skills misidentified by panelists as “leadership” competencies.*	
1	“News sense is essential, editors have to be good journalists to lead a newspaper”
2	“At least one professional internship”
3	“At least a year on staff”
4	“Have the skills to write, copyedit and report well are key. If the editor can’t do the job of almost
5	everyone in the newsroom, there is no one for others to ask questions of” (“The editor must be
6	capable of doing almost every job in the newsroom”) (“Be competent in aspects of journalism,
7	but understand there is always room for growth”)
8	“A strong knowledge of the process and all aspects of the process of creating and publishing a
9	newspaper”
10	“News sense is essential, editors have to be good journalists to lead a newspaper”
11	“Knowledge of current news events nationally, state wide, city wide and community wide”
12	(“Current events”)
13	“Strong writing skills” (“Know how to write”)
14	“Strong editing skills” (“Editing quickly became one of the top priorities in my life”)
15	“Knowledge of layout and design”
16	“Be experienced in how to write stories, columns, features”
17	“Know what questions the reporters should ask during interviews”
18	“Know where the reporters should go to get information for their stories”
19	“Know how to write cutlines for photos in case the photographers don’t do it”

\* The list contains panelists’ verbatim responses

In Round Two, the 27 leadership competencies (skills) and 31 leadership behaviors identified in Round One were returned for the panels' consensus. Using a 4-point Likert Scale, the panel rated each item from “least” to “most” important. The results are presented in Tables 19 and 20.

**Table 19. Leadership Competencies (Skills) Rated by Panel Members**

The expert panel rated the leadership competencies (skills) and behaviors they previously identified as most important to the effective execution of the role of a top newsroom leader. (Table 8, Question 2)

<b>Leadership Competencies (Skills)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ability to communicate	3.96	0.20	1
Ability to make tough decisions	3.83	0.38	2
Ability and willingness to educate your staff	3.83	0.38	3
Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	3.79	0.41	4
Ability to set goals	3.75	0.44	5
Ability to listen to staff	3.71	0.46	6
Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	3.71	0.46	7
Leads by example	3.71	0.46	8
Ability to delegate	3.67	0.48	9
Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	3.67	0.56	10
Preparedness	3.63	0.49	11
Expects results from staff	3.63	0.49	12
Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	3.63	0.49	13
Ability to motivate	3.58	0.58	14
Ability to build a team	3.58	0.50	15
Secure enough to give and receive critiques	3.54	0.51	16
Separating people from problems	3.54	0.51	17
Ability to reward and reprimand	3.52	0.59	18
A preparedness for ethical situations	3.52	0.51	19
Accessibility	3.50	0.59	20
Organized	3.46	0.66	21
Demonstrates journalism competencies	3.42	0.58	22
In touch with the student community	3.29	0.62	23
Experience holding other newsroom positions	3.25	0.61	24
Understand the staff also has classes and a life outside of the paper	3.21	0.78	25
Knowledge of media law	3.08	0.65	26
Participates in workshops, conferences, and courses to develop skills	2.79	0.72	27

**Table 20. Leadership Behaviors Rated by Panel Members**

Leadership Behaviors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Dependable	3.96	0.20	1
Dedication to the paper and staff	3.92	0.28	2
Honesty	3.88	0.34	3
A passion to improve and develop newspaper	3.79	0.41	4
Motivated	3.71	0.46	5
Fair	3.71	0.46	6
Decisive	3.71	0.46	7
Consistent	3.58	0.50	8
Mature	3.54	0.66	9
Open minded	3.54	0.51	10
Straightforward	3.50	0.66	11
Determined	3.50	0.59	12
Supportive	3.46	0.59	13
Intelligent	3.46	0.66	14
Prompt	3.46	0.59	15
Self-confident	3.38	0.58	16
Trusting	3.38	0.58	17
Long-term vision	3.38	0.49	18
Inspiring	3.25	0.61	19
Firm	3.21	0.88	20
Exhibits positive attitude	3.21	0.83	21
Patient	3.21	0.66	22
Creative	3.21	0.51	23
Flexible	3.13	0.61	24
Unflappable, excellent anger management	3.13	0.68	25
Courageous	3.13	0.68	26
Enthusiastic	3.08	0.93	27
Tolerant	3.08	0.83	28
Compassion	3.04	0.75	29
Sense of humor	2.96	0.95	30
Nurturing	2.63	0.88	31

Panelists' responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 3.58 for competencies (skills) and 3.54 for behaviors were returned for consensus building in Round Three. These correspond to scores of 89 percent and 88 percent respectively or approximately the top 10 percent in each list. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics.

In Round Three, participants were asked to choose the three most important competencies/skills and the three most important behaviors from the list of 15 competencies/skills and 10 behaviors. The results are shown in Tables 21 and 22.

**Table 21. Leadership Competencies (Skills) Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel identified the following 15 leadership "competencies" and 10 leadership "behaviors" as important for an incoming editor in chief.

Leadership Competencies (skills)	Score	Rank
Ability to communicate	11	1
Ability to make tough decisions	10	2
Ability to motivate	8	3
Ability and willingness to educate your staff	6	4
Ability to build a team	4	5
Ability to delegate	4	6
Leads by example	4	7
Ability to listen to staff	4	8
Preparedness	3	9
Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	3	10
Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	3	11
Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	2	12
Expects results from staff	2	13
Ability to set goals	2	14
Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	2	15



**Table 22. Leadership Behaviors Ranked by Panel Members**

Leadership Behaviors	Score	Rank
A passion to improve and develop the newspaper	16	1
Dedication to the paper and staff	14	2
Dependable	8	3
Honesty	7	4
Open minded	5	5
Fair	5	6
Motivated	5	7
Consistent	4	8
Decisive	4	9
Mature	1	10

The panelists indicated that when forced to choose three from a list of 15 leadership competencies and/or skills necessary for a top newsroom leader's success, the "ability to communicate" (11) and the "ability to make tough decisions" (10) led the list. The panels' ranking of these items may indicate their understanding of the role these items play in their success with the next highest ranked roles, "ability to motivate" (8) and "ability and willingness to educate your staff" (6) both of which experts explain require effective communication skills. The next four items "ability to build a team," "ability to delegate," "leads by example," and "ability to listen to staff" all received a ranking of four. This is consistent with panelists' original responses concerning leadership competencies where they were emphatic about team-building, delegating, setting an example, and listening as being critical to the top leadership position. The relative ranking of these four items may be more of a reflection of the panelists being asked to choose the most important competency and/or skill. The panelists' replies may be an indication that they regard the two top ranked items as essential to success in all other competencies and/or skills.

When asked to choose three leadership behaviors from a list of 10 they considered most important to the role of top newsroom leader, 70 percent selected "a passion to improve and develop the newspaper" (16) and 61 percent selected "dedication to the

paper and staff “(14) as the top two leadership behaviors. The high score these top two leadership behaviors received reflect the importance panelists’ place on the level of commitment and loyalty they believe are necessary for success in this role. The next highest rankings were “dependable” with a score of (8) or 35 percent followed by “honesty” with a score of (7) or 30 percent.

Although “honesty” ranked among the top four, its percentage score of 30 is not consistent with the results of Kouzes and Posner’s study of all leaders which ranks honesty, at 88 percent, as the top characteristic of admired leaders. It may not be that college newsroom leaders do not place a high value on honesty, only that the college newsroom culture, with its unique demands on student leaders, places a higher emphasis on commitment to the newspaper and loyalty to the staff to succeed.

### **Leadership Competencies Panel Members Lacked**

In Round One, Question 7, members of the expert panel were asked to identify leadership competencies they “lacked” that would have helped make them more effective in their roles as newsroom leaders.

***Question 7:** What leadership competencies do you lack that you think would have helped you be a more effective leader? (see Table 6, Question 7)*

The panel identified 22 leadership competencies they “lacked” that would have helped make them be more effective in their roles as newsroom leaders (Table 23). The panelists’ wording or phrasing was used in the development of the list in order to insure an accurate representation of the panelists’ thoughts and ideas.

**Table 23. Leadership Competencies Panel Members Lacked**

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Leadership competencies panel members identified as ones they “lacked” that they thought would have made them more effective leaders.

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1. Experience with all aspects of the newspaper
2. Passion for continuous improvement
3. Decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees
4. Ability to separate people from problems
5. Consistency
6. Diplomacy and tact (being truthful without being destructive)
7. Foresight and ability to confront problems before they escalate
8. Confidence in decision-making

**Table 23. Continued**


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9. Ability to bring people together as a team
10. Ability to delegate
11. Refraining from completing other people's assignments
12. Oral communication skills
13. Ability to take charge
14. Confidence in myself and others
15. Patience
16. Ability to motivate staff
17. Flexibility
18. Ability to control anger
19. Ability to inspire other staff members
20. Ability to communicate vision to staff
21. Recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader
22. Lacked awareness of the situations to be faced in that role

---

The 22 leadership competencies panelists identified as ones they lacked were returned to the panel in Round Two. Using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “least” critical to “most” critical, the panel rated the criticality of each competency to the top leadership position (Table 24). While it is understood that the original list was made up of each panelist's individual deficiencies, there was value in knowing if the panel considered any one item as most critical.

**Table 24. Criticality of Leadership Deficiencies Rated by Panel Members**

Using the list of leadership competencies previously identified by panel members as ones they lacked, the panel rated the criticality of each one to the role of top newsroom leader.

---

Competencies Lacked	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Ability to take charge	3.67	0.48	1
Recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader	3.58	0.72	2
Ability to motivate staff	3.54	0.66	3
Passion for continuous improvement	3.50	0.59	4
Confidence in decision-making	3.48	0.51	5
Ability to communicate vision to staff	3.46	0.59	6
Oral communication skills	3.46	0.66	7
Decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees	3.46	0.59	8
Patience	3.38	0.65	9

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**Table 24. Continued**

<b>Competencies Lacked</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Confidence in myself and others	3.33	0.70	10
Ability to bring people together as a team	3.33	0.64	11
Ability to inspire other staff members	3.29	0.69	12
Foresight and ability to confront problems before they escalate	3.29	0.62	13
Diplomacy and tact (being truthful without being destructive)	3.29	0.69	14
Ability to control anger	3.17	0.87	15
Flexibility	3.17	0.76	16
Ability to delegate	3.17	0.70	17
Consistency	3.17	0.70	18
Ability to separate people from problems	3.04	0.81	19
Lacked awareness of the difficult situations editor in chief must face	2.96	1.07	20
Refraining from completing other people's assignments	2.92	0.72	21
Experience with all aspects of the newspaper	2.75	0.68	22

Panelists' responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item returned was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 3.46 were returned for consensus building in Round Three. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics. Eight items were returned.

In Round Three, participants were asked to choose, from a list of eight deficiencies, the three most critical to the effective execution of the top newsroom leadership role. The results are shown in Table 25.

**Table 25. Critical Leadership Deficiencies Ranked by Panel Members**

Using the list of leadership deficiencies previously rated by panel members, the panel ranked the criticality of each one to the role of top newsroom leader.

<b>Competencies Lacked</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Lacks ability to take charge	13	1
Lacks passion for continuous improvement	10	2
Lacks ability to communicate vision to staff	9	3

**Table 25. Continued**

<b>Competencies Lacked</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Lacks ability to motivate staff	9	4
Lacks ability to recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader	9	5
Lacks decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees	8	6
Lacks oral communication skills	6	7
Lacks confidence in decision-making	5	8

When asked to choose three deficiencies from a list of eight considered most critical to the leadership role, “lacks ability to take charge” at 13, received the highest score. However, since the scores ranged from 13 to 5, and the average score was 8.6, therefore there was no clear consensus about the criticality of the remaining deficiencies.

### **Experiences That Shaped Panelists' Understanding of Editor in Chief Role**

The panelists identified 22 examples of ways their understanding of the role of editor in chief has been shaped by their experience as a top newsroom leader. These examples are listed in Table 26.

***Question 9:** How has the experience of being a college newspaper editor shaped your understanding of the editor in chief leadership position? (see Table 6, Question 9)*

**Table 26. Experiences That Shaped Panelists' Understanding of Editor in Chief Role**

<b>Experiences identified by panelists as helping to shape their understanding of the editor in chief role</b>
1. Better understand the commitment and obligation involved in teambuilding
2. That editors must deal with very tough decisions
3. Leadership training is important for success.
4. The editor in chief is captain of the ship that holds everything together
5. The position requires a significant time commitment. It's a real newsroom. It's a full-time job
6. Has a lot to do with journalism, but it is really about leadership
7. The importance of the editor setting the tone of the entire paper
8. It's not just a title, it is not glamorous, it's a difficult and often frustrating position
9. People need praise and recognition to operate well
10. Because of the nature of the job, no one's ever going to say “wow, you did a great job today”

**Table 26. Continued**

11. Most of the work you do is so someone else can actually do his/her job better
12. Most stressful position I have ever held with enormous pressure to perform
13. It taught me how to deal with people
14. A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility
15. Importance of editor being engaged with the community
16. Leadership cannot be taught
17. Must be willing to learn from others
18. Leadership is about character and requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be treated
19. Must always lead by example
20. Editor must love the challenges of journalism
21. A student newspaper is a professional newspaper run by students
22. The joy that comes from seeing your hard work pay off

The list of 22 experiences identified by the experts were returned to the panelists in Round Two. Panelists were asked to rate the importance of each experience as it related to the role of editor in chief using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from least important to most important. The results are presented in Table 27.

**Table 27. Experiences That Shaped Panelists' Understanding of Editor in Chief Role Rated by Panel Members**

The expert panel rated the following experiences as having shaped their understanding of the editor in chief role. (Appendix G, Question 4)

Experiences	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Must be willing to learn from others	3.58	0.50	1
A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility	3.54	0.51	2
It's a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment	3.54	0.59	3
A student newspaper is a professional newspaper run by students	3.50	0.83	4
Editor must love the challenges of journalism	3.50	0.72	5
It's not just a title, it is not glamorous, it's a difficult and often frustrating position	3.50	0.83	6
That editors must deal with very tough decisions	3.38	0.58	7
It taught me how to deal with people	3.33	0.82	8
Must always lead by example	3.25	0.68	9
Leadership is about character and requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be treated	3.25	0.79	10

**Table 27. Continued**

<b>Experiences</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
People need praise and recognition to operate well	3.25	0.61	11
Most of the work you do is so someone else can actually do his/her job better	3.21	0.93	12
The importance of the editor setting the tone of the entire paper	3.17	0.82	13
The joy that comes from seeing your hard work pay off	3.13	0.74	14
Because of the nature of the job, no one's ever going to say "wow, you did a great job today."	3.08	1.21	15
Better understand the commitment and obligation involved in teambuilding	3.04	0.55	16
The editor in chief is captain of the ship that holds everything together	3.00	0.88	17
Importance of editor being engaged with the community	2.83	0.82	18
Has a lot to do with journalism, but it is really about leadership	2.83	0.76	19
Most stressful position I have ever held with enormous pressure to perform	2.79	1.06	20
Leadership cannot be taught	2.75	1.15	21
Leadership training is important for success	2.67	0.92	22

Panelists' responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 3.21 were returned for consensus building in Round Three. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics. Twelve "experiences" were returned.

In Round Three, participants were asked to choose the three most important from the list. The results are shown in Table 28.

**Table 28. Experiences That Shaped Panelists' Understanding of Editor in Chief Role Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel ranked the following experiences as having shaped their understanding of the editor in chief role (see Appendix H, Question 4)			
<b>Experiences</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>	
It's not just a title, it is not glamorous, it's a difficult and often frustrating position	10	1	
It's a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment	10	2	
A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility	9	3	
That editors must deal with very tough decisions	7	4	
Must be willing to learn from others	7	5	

**Table 28. Continued**

<b>Experiences</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Most of the work you do is so someone else can actually do his/her job better	5	6
Editor must love the challenges of journalism	5	7
A student newspaper is a professional newspaper run by students	5	8
People need praise and recognition to operate well	3	9
Leadership is about character and requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be treated	3	10
It taught me how to deal with people	3	11
Must always lead by example	2	12

From the list of 12 experiences they identified as helping to shape their understanding of the editor in chief role, panelists were asked to name the three they regarded as most important. The two highest ranked items, with a score of 10, were the statements: “It’s not just a title, it is not glamorous, and it’s a difficult and often frustrating position” and “It’s a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment.” A third statement, “A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility” received a score of 9. The rankings of those items indicated there is agreement that the role requires a high degree of dedication to meet the time commitment, frustration, and amount of responsibilities associated with the role.

### **Leadership Situations That Define the Unique College Newsroom Arena**

The panelists were asked in Round One, Question 10 to identify competencies they considered unique to the role of top college newsroom leader (as opposed to that of a professional newsroom leadership role). Panelists’ replies offered examples of situations they thought were unique to that role, rather than specific competencies unique to that role. Their individual responses indicate the panelists interpreted the question in a similar fashion. This may be a reflection of the multiple competencies required to deal with many of the situations. For example, the item “dealing with uncommitted students” would require the leader to be able to motivate, inspire, communicate, and mentor. While panelists did not offer specific competencies in their replies to this question, the results reflect their understanding of the college newsroom as a unique culture. Their statements



**Question 10:** *Do you think there are any leadership competencies that are unique to being a college editor in chief (as opposed to professional leadership roles)? (see Table 6, Question 10)*

were returned in Round Two for consideration because they specifically address the unique nature of the college newsroom. Heilbrunn (1996) argues that leadership studies have neglected to address the “variety of arenas in which different kinds of leaders operate” (p. 8). These responses help to define the college newsroom arena and provide the context for the competencies identified in this study. These newsroom situations are listed in Table 29.

The list of 20 situations identified by the expert panel as unique to the college newsroom was returned to the panelists in Round Two. Panelists were asked to rate how important each situation was to their experience in that role using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from not important to most important. The results are presented in Table 30.

**Table 29. Situations Unique to College Newspaper Leadership Experience**

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Members of the expert panel identified the following as examples of situations they considered unique to a college editor in chief's leadership experience.

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1. Staff changes more frequently
  2. College leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper
  3. The newspaper is not the primary activity for all staff members
  4. All or part of the staff is unpaid (volunteer)
  5. Dealing with uncommitted students
  6. Teaching is a continuous activity
  7. College students are more likely to quit if they aren't excited about the job (motivate)
  8. You're more connected to your readership and must deal directly with more unhappy readers
  9. You have one or maybe two years to learn a job
  10. Everyone thinks the paper is put out by the university and therefore it's a mouthpiece
  11. Your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers
  12. You become a model for other students, even those who are not in your line of study
  13. Get your peers to respect you, which is often difficult on the collegiate level
  14. Must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper
  15. Duties are much broader as a college editor than in the professional world
  16. It's an enormous amount of responsibility for a college student
  17. The college editor has more creative freedom
  18. Maternal/paternal role. Make sure staff eats, studies and makes it to class on time
  19. Some students are very sensitive about their work
  20. It takes time for the staff to stop seeing you as a peer and realize you're their editor and their boss
-

Panelists' responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 3.13 were returned for consensus building in Round Three. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics. Eight items were returned.

**Table 30. Unique College Newspaper Situations Rated by Panel Members**

The expert panel rated the following unique college newsroom situations they considered unique to a college editor in chief's leadership experience.( see Appendix G, Question 5)

Criteria	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Staff changes more frequently	3.46	0.66	1
Must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper	3.38	0.82	2
Dealing with uncommitted students	3.33	0.70	3
College leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper	3.29	0.86	4
Teaching is a continuous activity	3.25	0.74	5
Your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers	3.21	0.88	6
It takes time for the staff to stop seeing you as a peer and realize you're their editor and their boss	3.13	0.90	7
College students are more likely to quit if they aren't excited about the job (motivation)	3.13	0.95	8
Get your peers to respect you, which is often difficult on the collegiate level	3.04	0.95	9
It's an enormous amount of responsibility for a college student	3.00	1.14	10
Some students are very sensitive about their work	2.88	0.74	11
Duties are much broader as a college editor than in the professional world	2.88	1.08	12
You become a model for other students, even those who are not in your line of study	2.83	1.01	13
You're more connected to your readership and must deal directly with more unhappy readers	2.75	0.99	14
You have one or maybe two years to learn a job	2.71	0.86	15
The college editor has more creative freedom	2.63	0.88	16
Everyone thinks the paper is put out by the university and therefore it's a mouthpiece	2.50	1.25	17
All or part of the staff is unpaid	2.46	1.14	18
Maternal/paternal role. Make sure staff eats, studies and makes it to class on time	2.38	1.17	19

In Round Three, participants were asked to choose the three most important, from a list of eight unique college newsroom situations. The results are shown in Table 31.

This culture may help explain why the highest scoring statement “must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper” received a score of 15. The next three highest ranked items “dealing with uncommitted students” with a score of 12, “staff changes more frequently” with a score of 11, and “college leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper” with a score of 10, all reflect demands placed on the college newsroom leader. The typical college newspaper staff is composed mostly of volunteers or low-paid students. The staff members are relatively inexperienced, requiring more training, and are short-term employees. Their short-term goals include working for the newspaper, but their long-term goals are to graduate. These circumstances are unique to the college newsroom experience as opposed to professional or commercial newspapers.

**Table 31. Unique College Newspaper Situations Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel ranked the following unique college newsroom situations they considered unique to a college editor in chief’s leadership experience.

Criteria	Score	Rank
Must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper	15	1
Dealing with uncommitted students	12	2
Staff changes more frequently	11	3
College leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper	10	4
Teaching is a continuous activity	7	5
Your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers	6	6
It takes time for the staff to stop seeing you as a peer and realize you’re their editor and their boss	5	7
College students are more likely to quit if they aren’t excited about the job (motivation)	3	8

## Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors That Separate an Average College Newsroom Leader from a Great College Newsroom Leader

In their replies to Question 11, panelists identified 23 competencies, skills, and behaviors as ones that separate a great newsroom leader from an average newsroom leader. These examples are listed in Table 32.

**Question 11:** *What separates an average student newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader? (see Table 6, Question 11)*

**Table 32. Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors That Separate Great College Newspaper Leaders from Average College Newspaper Leaders**

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1.	Compassion
2.	Dedication to newspaper
3.	Has staffs' respect
4.	Passion for journalism
5.	Looks for opportunities to become involved as a voice of the campus community
6.	Ability to command attention by just walking in the room
7.	Ability to offer positive criticism
8.	The willingness to learn
9.	The ability to teach and guide staff
10.	Vision for the paper and the ability to implement that vision
11.	Ability to incorporate others' ideas into the master plan
12.	To be firm, but fair
13.	Lead by example
14.	Ability to inspire staff members to reach higher goals
15.	Ethical
16.	Give staff encouragement
17.	Knows when it is time to have fun and when it is time to be professional
18.	Operates by a standard of excellence
19.	Regard college newspaper as more than a stepping-stone to a job in the "real world"
20.	The ability to motivate coworkers
21.	Establishes unique relationships with everyone on staff
22.	Ability to build a team
23.	Goes above or beyond the call of duty

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These 23 leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors were returned to the panelists in Round Two. Using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from not important to most important, panelists were asked to rate the importance of each item in determining what

separates an average newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader. The results are presented in Table 33.

Panelists' responses were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Only those responses from panelists with a mean score of 3.54 were returned for consensus building in Round Three. The low-rated items were removed from further consideration because the study is interested in the most important characteristics. Ten competencies, skills, and behaviors were returned.

**Table 33. Leadership Characteristics That Separate Great College Newspaper Leaders from Average College Newspaper Leaders Rated by Panel Members**

The expert panel rated the following competencies, skills, and behaviors they say separate an "average" newsroom leader from a "great" newsroom leader. (see Appendix G, Question 6)

Criteria	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Ethical	3.88	0.34	1
Dedication to newspaper	3.88	0.34	2
Goes above or beyond the call of duty	3.79	0.41	3
The willingness to learn	3.79	0.41	4
The ability to teach and guide staff	3.75	0.44	5
Ability to offer positive criticism	3.71	0.46	6
Operates by a standard of excellence	3.70	0.47	7
Vision for the paper and the ability to implement that vision	3.63	0.49	8
Has staffs' respect	3.63	0.58	9
Lead by example	3.54	0.66	10
Regard college newspaper as more than a stepping-stone to a job in the "real world"	3.50	0.59	11
Knows when it is time to have fun and when it is time to be professional	3.50	0.78	12
To be firm, but fair	3.50	0.59	13
Ability to build a team	3.46	0.51	14
The ability to motivate coworkers	3.46	0.51	15
Give staff encouragement	3.42	0.58	16
Ability to inspire staff members to reach higher goals	3.42	0.58	17
Passion for journalism	3.42	0.72	18
Ability to incorporate others' ideas into the master plan	3.25	0.74	19
Establishes unique relationships with everyone on staff	3.09	1.00	20
Compassion	3.00	0.78	21
Looks for opportunities to become involved as a voice of the campus community	2.71	0.81	22
Ability to command attention by just walking in the room	2.54	0.98	23

In Round Three, participants were asked to choose the three most important from the list. The results are shown in Table 34.

When asked to choose three competencies, skills, and behaviors from a list of 10 that separate an average college newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader, “dedication to newspaper” received the highest ranking with a score of 10. The panel’s ranking of this item is consistent with their highest ranked items in the category of skills they previously identified as helping them to understand the role of editor in chief. The rankings of those items indicated there is agreement that the role requires a high degree of dedication to meet the time commitment, frustration, and amount of responsibilities associated with the role.

**Table 34. Leadership Characteristics That Separate Great College Newspaper Leaders from Average College Newspaper Leaders Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel ranked the following 10 leadership “competencies,” “skills,” and “behaviors” that separate an “average” newsroom leader from a “great” newsroom leader. (see Appendix H, Question 6)

Criteria	Score	Rank
Dedication to newspaper	10	1
Ethical	9	2
The ability to teach and guide staff	9	3
Goes above or beyond the call of duty	9	4
Vision for the paper and the ability to implement that vision	7	5
Operates by a standard of excellence	7	6
Has staffs’ respect	6	7
The willingness to learn	6	8
Ability to offer positive criticism	4	9
Leads by example	2	10

The next three highest ranked items received a score of 9. These identify great college newsroom leaders as those who are ethical, have the ability to teach and guide their staffs, and are willing to go above or beyond the call of duty. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that to be seen as capable, leaders must demonstrate the ability to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage. More importantly, Kouzes and Posner state that ethics is related to values and honesty. In their study, honesty is the top rated leadership

characteristic of all admired leaders. They state that “honesty is the single-most important ingredient in the leader-constituent relationship...“We appreciate people who take a stand on important principles” (p. 22). The four highest ranked items in this round, indeed all 10 items included in this round are consistent with those abilities.

### **Research Question Two**

Research Question Two asked: How do the leadership competencies identified by the expert panelists as necessary for success in the student newsroom culture compare to those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders? This question was addressed in Rounds One, Two, and Three. Round One questions 4, 5, 6 and 12 address Research Question Two. Only replies to Questions 6 and 12 were returned for consensus building as Questions 2 and 7 in the next two rounds.

***Question 4:** Before becoming editor in chief or managing editor, what leadership competencies did you most admire in student newsroom leaders? (see Table 6, Question 4).*

Question 4 in Round One was important to the study because experts tell us that certain characteristics and behaviors are critical to all effective leaders. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state “Leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they are doing their best. And this behavior varies little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, country to country. Good leadership is an understandable and universal process” (p. xxiii). However, Heilbrunn (1996) emphasizes that a generic model of leadership is limited because it does not address the unique “environments” or “variety of arenas” in which leaders function. Heilbrunn states that “the field of leadership studies has remained hobbled by its epistemological commitments...and lacks an adequate concern for context, historical or situational” (p. 8). Peters (2001) identified the leadership traits that are most admired in professional newsroom leaders. The panel members identified the most admired characteristics or traits for college newsroom leaders.

The 25 panel members listed a total of 79 statements to this open-ended question concerning the competencies they “most admired” in newsroom leaders prior to their own leadership experience. Question 4 was not returned for consensus building because it asked for the competencies the panelists admired prior to becoming a top newsroom editor. The competencies identified by the expert panelist fit into 12 categories as shown in Table 35. Participants said they admired leaders who demonstrated competence; showed ability to inspire; demonstrated the ability to build a team; fostered a learning environment; valued each staff member as an individual; valued the staff’s input; had the ability to communicate a vision; showed dedication to the newspaper; offered encouragement; showed courage; showed creativity; and showed determination.

**Table 35. Competencies Editors “Most Admired” in Newspaper Leaders prior to Becoming Editor in Chief or Managing Editor**

<b>Demonstrated Competence (journalism and leadership)</b>
1. She was truly a role model
2. Admired their communication skills
3. Knowledgeable
4. A strong knowledge of and ability to perform any of the functions on staff
5. Admired their depth of knowledge of journalism
6. Admired their journalism skills
7. Good insights into journalism
8. Understood task at hand
9. I admired the relationship they had with our adviser
10. Encouraged and accepted change
11. They were for change and they wanted change
12. Having a new adviser who wanted change and was looking to make a difference was a positive thing
13. Ability to remain calm under pressure
14. Ability to interact with top college administrators
15. Their ability to plan well
16. Admired a leader who would fill in for other editors when they wanted to take a day off
17. Ability to perform any of the functions of staff
18. Ability to solve problems
19. Ability to make difficult decisions
20. The ability to balance being in school with a full-time job
21. Ability to keep class together under stressed conditions
22. I admired his ability to laugh when things were going wrong
23. Easy to get along with



**Table 35. Continued**

- 
24. I admired how the editor in chief could be stressed out, but never really show it to her staff. She would always seem so calm and cool, despite the fact that the newspaper had a hole on page one or had three errors in the last issue
- 

**Showed Ability to Inspire**

---

1. Passion
  2. Ability to inspire
  3. Ability to motivate people
  4. The ability to create a desire to excel
  5. They had motivating personalities
  6. I have always admired the ability of student leaders to inspire those around them
  7. The ability to motivate the staff by communicating with them verbally
  8. Ability to help other students understand the value of what they are doing
  9. I admire leaders who can give people a purpose
  10. Made others feel important and needed
- 

**Demonstrated Ability to Build a Team**

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1. Devotion to staff and its success
  2. Ability to inspire teamwork
  3. Tight knit group philosophy
  4. Cared not just about the paper but also about the staff
  5. Ability to earn friendship and respect from staff
  6. Loyalty to staff
  7. Availability
  8. Created an enjoyable work atmosphere
  9. The fact the editor was always available at one point or another to get a hold of when problems came up and the way he/she kept the staff together as kind of like a family of friends
  10. The ability to allow independent function, but also bring the staff together as a team
- 

**Fostered a Learning Environment**

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1. Dedication and ability to train and mentor staff
  2. Devotion to staff and its success
  3. Editors before me emphasized most that what you learn in the classroom supplements what you learn working on a newspaper
  4. No question is a stupid question
  5. Ability to teach
  6. Always available to train or mentor staff members
  7. Devotion to training
  8. An ability to truly teach others
- 

**Valued Each Staff Member as an Individual**

---

1. Always treated everyone respectfully and as an equal
  2. She remembered names
  3. Referred to recent copy I'd written
  4. Commented on recent copy I had written
  5. People feel as though they are being respected, they are willing to take part in the creative process
  6. The ones I admired seemed to care not just about the sheet of paper but about the staff and the people they worked with
-

**Table 35. Continued**

<b>Valued the Staff's Input</b>	
1.	The editor valued the ideas and opinions of every writer, designer, etc.
2.	Listened
3.	If the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution
4.	One person's ideas get bland and tiresome. If more people's ideas are being used, it gives the paper a sense of liveliness
5.	Interacted with everyone to make sure all voices were heard
<b>Ability to Communicate a Vision</b>	
1.	Ability to communicate a vision for the paper
2.	Vision for the paper
3.	Set goals that the staff bought in to
4.	They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college careers
5.	I still keep his vision as the basis for many decisions we make
<b>Showed Dedication to the Newspaper</b>	
1.	They were there for the betterment of the publication
2.	Although working for the paper would aid them in the long run, they ultimately wanted to see the paper and its staff members succeed
3.	Inspiring to see someone so dedicated to bettering the student newspaper
<b>Offered Encouragement</b>	
1.	Giving those eager to participate a chance
2.	Always helpful
3.	I admire the ability to praise the staff
<b>Showed Courageous</b>	
1.	I loved the people who were willing to fight for a story or coverage or stand up to anything
2.	The ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism
3.	The ability to make strong, often controversial decisions in regard to the newspaper
<b>Showed Creativity</b>	
1.	I've always been attracted to creativity and innovation when it is tempered with a respect for tradition and history
<b>Showed Determination</b>	
1.	Determination

### **Demonstrated Competence**

Panelists offered the most examples of qualities they “admired” in leaders in the area of competence. They gave examples of expertise specific to leadership competence as well as examples specific to the journalism craft. Kouzes and Posner (1997) explain functional competence in one's craft as one aspect of leadership competence, and expertise in both is needed for effective leadership.

The panelists who included journalism competence in their answers gave them as one aspect of the role, not as the only skills necessary for success in that role. In fact, the panelists were able to articulate their understanding of the complex nature of the role by listing numerous examples. One panelist stated:

My editor was skilled at every aspect of the newspaper. He could talk the advertising jargon, design anything using Quark and “schmooze” the president of the University in a tough interview. From my editor I learned that I needed to be competent in every aspect of the paper. If I expected someone else to do something, I better be able to do it myself.

Another panelist described the necessity for having a “distinct understanding of all aspects of the task at hand and a strong knowledge of and ability to perform any of the functions on staff.”

The panelists gave numerous examples of leadership skills they admired and, although “communication skills” is specifically identified by only one panelist, those skills would be critical to each of the remaining competencies identified as admired by panelists, including the relationship they have with advisers.

The leadership skill that panelists described most often as one they admired was the ability of student leaders to keep their composure in the face of newsroom pressures. An editor from a newspaper that publishes three times per week stated:

I admired how the editor in chief could be stressed out, but never really show it to her staff. She would always seem so calm and cool despite the fact that the newspaper had a hole on page one or had three errors in the last issue.

The ability to remain calm under pressure was mentioned by one panelist as a strength although she considered the former editor to be a weak leader. She stated, “I didn’t have a strong leader, but what I admired most about my predecessor was his ability to laugh when things were going wrong.” The intense pressure described by students as part of the newsroom culture may be one of the reasons they also admire leaders who “plan well” and have “the ability to balance being in school with a full-time job” while also being “easy to get along with.” In spite of the stress associated with being editor in chief of a college newspaper, one panelist stated she “admired a leader who

would fill in for other editors when they wanted to take a day off,” and three of the 25 panelists said they admired student leaders who both encouraged and accepted change. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that change is often associated with increased stress. However, they also state that individuals who are able to respond to stressful situations with “psychological hardiness” or a positive mind set, are better prepared to take the stress that accompanies change in stride. This would also help to explain why some editors are able to “interact with top college administrators, “solve problems,” and make “difficult decisions”—three more “most admired” traits of college newsroom leaders.

The panelist’s responses in the other 11 categories indicate an intense, often passionate viewpoint concerning some of those other traits as well, especially the editor’s ability to inspire the staff and his or her ability to build a team.

### **Showed Ability to Inspire**

Panelist’s replies indicate they are inspired by editors who help staff members understand their value to the newspaper. One current editor in chief explained, “Sometimes people wonder why they are even on staff. I admire leaders who can give people a purpose, who make others feel important and needed.” Another explained she admired the editor’s “ability to help other students understand the value of what they are doing.” Several of the panelists’ replies indicate they were personally inspired by the leader’s ability to motivate another staff member. One panelist stated, “I have always admired the ability of student leaders I have worked with to inspire those around them. Some have been able to do it so effortlessly and efficiently that they are a joy to work with.” Another editor stated he admired leaders who had “the ability to create a desire in others to excel, rather than simply accept mediocrity.” Panelists also admired editors with “motivating personalities” and “the ability to motivate the staff by communicating with them verbally.” One editor described a former leader’s “passion” as one of the ways he inspired her, stating “My editor had a passion for the newspaper that could not be matched. It was inspiring to see someone so dedicated to bettering the student newspaper.”

### **Demonstrated Ability to Build a Team**

In particular, the ability to inspire teamwork is cited by panelists in category three as an important skill for newsroom leaders. One panelist explained he admired leaders who had “the ability to allow independent function, but also bring the staff together as a team.” Members of the panel also admired editors who are “able to earn both the respect and friendship of staff members while also fostering a “tight-knit group philosophy” where the staff is seen as “a family of friends.” Experts said the editor should care about the people, as much as the paper, by “being available to the staff,” showing “loyalty” and “devotion to the staff and its success.” From the examples cited by these panelists, it appears they place the majority of teambuilding responsibilities with the editor in chief. They also appear to consider teambuilding as significant to the “creation of an enjoyable work atmosphere.”

### **Fostered a Learning Environment**

The workplace atmosphere also appears to be significant in category four where editors cited the leaders’ ability to foster a learning environment as an admired skill important to the staffs’ success. Panelists cited the importance of the editor, not only being able to teach and mentor the staff, but also the importance of the editor being available and dedicated to training. One editor explained that an editor should have a “distinct understanding of all aspects of the task at hand, and a strong knowledge of and ability to perform any of the functions on staff, so that one can truly teach others.” (Competency was cited in category one and is also important in this category in order to facilitate teaching.)

### **Valued Each Staff Member as an Individual**

Another editor admired a predecessor who was “devoted to training.” This relates to the fifth category of most admired skills of editors, the ability to value each staff member as an individual. The former editor of a daily newspaper at a large public university offered the following description of her initial experience on staff: “The woman that served as editor in chief the first year that I joined the paper as a novice reporter always treated everyone respectfully and as an equal—from our front office

clerks to the managing editor. She remembered names, and would refer to me with personal information about recent copy I'd written, and always by my name." Other editors agreed stating, "The ones I admired seemed to care not just about the sheet of paper but about the staff and the people they worked with" and "people who feel as though they are being respected are more willing to take part in the creative process." Leaders who demonstrate a respect for staff members' work and ideas are cited by panelists as deserving admiration.

### **Valued the Staff's Input**

In category six, panelists cited several examples of skills they admired in editors that showed they valued the staff's input. The leader's ability to listen was cited most often. One editor explained how effective listening could affect the overall quality of the paper stating:

People have ideas all the time. Some of them are good, some of them not so good, others bad. But if the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution.... If an editor is listening to ideas the paper will become better. One person's ideas get bland and tiresome. If more people's ideas are being used, it gives the paper a sense of liveliness.

Geisler (2000) cites "active" listening as one of the characteristics of top leaders. Geisler states that "certain competencies, skills, and behaviors are hallmarks of top managers, even though their styles and personalities may be different." According to Geisler, the single most important influence on an employee is the leader and one of the leader's most important strategies is mastering the art of "deep" or "active" listening. One panelist explained, "If the editor listens, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution." This opinion was also held by other editors who stated they admired leaders who "valued the ideas and opinions of everyone on staff." One panelist stated:

Before becoming editor in chief and managing editor, I admired newsroom leaders who did not just "manage" the newspaper from his or her office, but

interacted with everyone in the newspaper to make sure that everyone's voice would be heard.

The examples panelists give in categories of team building, fostering a learning environment, valuing each staff member as an individual, and valuing the staff's input, all suggest that panelists admire leaders who model inclusive behavior. The competencies they admire in these categories, such as listening, teaching, and mentoring all require good communication skills on the part of the leader.

### **Ability to Communicate a Vision**

The ability to communicate effectively is also critical in category seven: "the ability to communicate a vision." Although there were fewer responses that fell into this group than previous groups, those offered were very convincing examples of this leadership competency. Again, the examples suggest an admiration for leaders who exhibit inclusive behavior. One editor stated:

Our newspaper has seen a major revival in four years, and the individual who started that was able to communicate his vision for the paper and set goals that the staff bought in to. I still keep his vision as the basis for many decisions we make.

Another editor also commented on the lasting effects of editors who are forward-looking, stating "They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college careers."

### **Showed Dedication to the Newspaper**

In this category, panelists describe the leaders' efforts to strengthen the newspaper and also to ensure its growth and development as a reflection of their dedication to the newspaper, another admired trait in editors. One panelist, commenting on her predecessor, stated "It was inspiring to see someone so dedicated to bettering the student newspaper." This may relate to the skill panelists identified in category two concerning the ability of editors to help students understand the value of working for the student newspaper. It may be one of the ways staff members are encouraged or shown the continuing value of their contribution beyond their tenure. Panelists said they

admired editors who were “There for the betterment of the publication” and “ultimately wanted to see the paper and its staff members succeed.”

### **Offered Encouragement**

The last four categories had far fewer examples, making those categories appear less significant. While this may or may not be the case, all of the observations relate to one or more of the previous categories of “most admired” traits of newsroom leaders. For example, in category nine, offered encouragement, one panelist stated “I admire the (editor’s) ability to praise the staff,” while others stated they admired editors who were “always helpful” and “gave those eager to participate a chance.” These relate to inspiring, valuing staff members, and teambuilding.

### **Showed Courage**

Panelists also cited courage as a trait they admire in leaders. One stated, “I loved the people who were willing to fight for a story or coverage or stand up to anything.” Others stated they admired leaders who had “the ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism” and leaders who had “the ability to make strong, often controversial decisions in regard to the newspaper.”

### **Showed Creativity and Determination**

Finally, both creativity and determination were cited as admired leadership traits. An editor from a daily at a large state university stated, “I’ve always been attracted to creativity and innovation when it is tempered with a respect for tradition and history.” Both creativity and determination relate to most of the previous categories.

### **Comparison to Kouzes and Posner’s List of Ideal Leadership Traits**

These leadership competencies were identified as qualities editors “most admired” in student newsroom leaders prior to their actual experience in the top leadership role. This initial list of 79 leadership competencies, in these 12 leadership categories, were compared to the list of 20 characteristics generated by Kouzes and



Posner (1997) and shown in Table 36. Of the examples given, 16, or 75 percent, were equivalent to or were similar to those identified by Kouzes and Posner.

In their responses to Question 4, the panelists did not name equivalent or similar traits to 4 of the top 20 on the list generated by Kouzes and Posner, including honest, intelligent, ambitious, and independent. It is important to note that unlike Kouzes and Posner's study, where business and government executives were given a list of traits and asked to choose or rank the most important from that list, the panelists for this study were not given traits or characteristics from which to choose in the initial round of the study. Rather, they were asked, in open-ended questions, to identify traits or characteristics in order to establish a list of the most important or admired traits of student newsroom leaders. Although four of these traits or characteristics were not identified they could be implied based on responses, such as "knowledge," "ability to perform any of the functions of the staff," and "ability to teach" could be used to imply intelligent.

**Table 36. Comparison of Panelist's Admired Characteristics of Leaders prior to Becoming Top Newspaper Leader with Admired Characteristics of All Leaders (Kouzes and Posner)**

<b>Kouzes and Posner (1997) Characteristics of Admired Leaders</b>	<b>Expert Panel (2005) Characteristics of Admired Leaders Prior to Assuming Top Leadership Role (Representative examples from Table 35)</b>
Honest	
Forward-looking	Vision for the paper They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college career
Inspiring	Ability to communicate a vision for the paper Inspiring, passion Admired their communication skills
Competent	Admired their depth of knowledge of journalism, ability to interact with top college administrators Understands task at hand
Fair-minded	Gave those eager to participate a chance Always treated everyone respectfully and as an equal
Supportive	Ability to praise, provided individuals with specific comments and praise Listened Commented on recent copy I had written Made others feel important and needed

**Table 36. Continued**

<b>Kouzes and Posner (1997) Characteristics of Admired Leaders</b>	<b>Expert Panel (2005) Characteristics of Admired Leaders Prior to Assuming Top Leadership Role (Representative examples from Table 35)</b>
Broad-minded	The editor valued the ideas and opinions of every writer, designer, staff member Encouraged and accepted change
Intelligent	
Straightforward	Easy to get along with
Dependable	Always available to train or mentor staff
Courageous	Ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism Willing to fight for a story
Cooperative	Dedication and ability to training and mentoring staff
Imaginative	Creativity
Caring	Made others feel important and needed (remembered names), treated everyone with respect
Determined	Determined
Mature	Ability to balance school with a full-time job
Ambitious	
Loyal	Devotion to staff and its success Dedication to newspaper Tight-knit group philosophy
Self-controlled	Ability to remain calm under pressure Ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism
Independent	

### **Comparison to Peters' List of Ideal Traits for Professional Leaders**

The competencies identified by the panel as qualities editors most admired in student newsroom leaders prior to their actual experience in the top leadership role were compared to a list of ideal traits Peters (2001) identified as “most revered” among professional journalists, who were not top newsroom leaders. This portion of Peters’ sample would have the same type of background as the panelists prior to their becoming a college newsroom leader. Of the qualities identified by the panel, 11, or 73 percent, were equivalent to or were similar to those identified by Peters in her nationwide survey of 1,151 professional journalists at small, midsize, and metropolitan newspapers. Peters got responses from non-supervisors, supervisors, and top newsroom editors.

The professional journalists, who participated in Peters' study, were provided with a list of 15 ideal traits of top newsroom leaders and asked to choose the top three. Table 37 shows how professional (non-editors) and student journalists' responses compare when they are asked to name the most admired or revered leadership traits of top newsroom leaders.

**Table 37. Comparison of Panelists' Admired Characteristics of Leaders prior to Becoming Editor in Chief and Professional Journalists Admired Characteristics of Leaders from Peters (2001)**

<b>Peters (2001) Ideal Traits of Top Editors (Editor, Executive Editor, Managing Editor) identified by newsroom staff</b>			<b>Expert Panel (2005) Prior to Assuming Top Leadership Role (Representative examples from Table 35)</b>
Leadership trait or behavior	Non-supervisor	Supervisor	Admired leadership competencies, skills, traits
Sound Judgment	49%	40% (3)	Ability to make difficult decisions I have always been attracted to creativity and innovation when it is tempered with a respect for tradition and history
Hiring/promoting wisely	42%	47% (2)	No equivalent
Setting high standards	41%	50% (1)	Ability to create a desire to excel Ability to help other students understand the value of what they are doing
Preparing for future challenges	29%	35% (4)	Encouraged and accepted change They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college career
Balancing profit demands/news values	20%	19% (7)	No Equivalent
Decisiveness	19%	30% (5)	Ability to make difficult decisions Ability to solve problems
People-oriented approach to policies	19%	15% (8)	The editor valued the ideas and opinions of every writer, designer, staff member
Communicating mission/goals	18%	24% (6)	Ability to communicate a vision for the paper Ability to inspire Passion Ability to motivate
Ensuring fair, competitive salaries	14%	12% (9)	No equivalent
Accessible to all employees	14%	10% (11)	The editor was always available...to train and mentor staff members
Collaborative work style	13%	11% (10)	Treated everyone with respect, made others feel important and needed gave those eager to participate a chance remembered names
Emphasizes constant staff learning	10%	4% (13)	Dedication and ability to training and devotion to staff and its success

**Table 37. Continued**

<b>Peters (2001) Ideal Traits of Top Editors (Editor, Executive Editor, Managing Editor) identified by newsroom staff</b>			<b>Expert Panel (2005) Prior to Assuming Top Leadership Role (Representative examples from Table 35)</b>
Assumes role of teacher/coach	9%	6% (12)	Dedication and ability to training and mentoring staff, Ability to praise Provided individuals with specific comments and praise
Communicates news values outward	3%	2% (15)	I love the people who were willing to fight for a story, or coverage, or stand up to anything
Delivers fair discipline	2%	3% (14)	No equivalent

\* ( ) signifies ranking for supervisors

The initial responses from college journalists, which appear to be most similar to Peters' list of ideal traits for top leaders, are related to interpersonal communication skills rather than policy and business practice. The panelists were most emphatic about the importance of student editors' responsibilities to train, mentor, encourage, and praise the efforts of new and existing staff members, which is consistent with professional journalists' emphasis on constant staff learning and assuming the role of teacher and coach. These traits are critical at the college level because student journalists are still learning the fundamental principles and skills of the craft and rely heavily on editors for all or most of their skills development. Also, for many, this may be their first experience with print journalism or they may not be journalism majors, requiring them to need even more on-the-job training. The panelists also indicated agreement with professional journalists in two other areas also requiring good interpersonal skills: people-oriented approach to policies and collaborative work style. The panel placed a high value on the editors' abilities to treat individual staff members at all levels with respect by valuing their ideas and opinions, giving those eager to participate a chance, making them feel needed, and remembering their names. Finally, the panel members, like their professional counterparts, emphasized the importance of editors communicating the mission and goals of the newspaper to the staff. They explained this in terms of having the passion to communicate a vision, motivate, and inspire the staff.

Panelists did not name four traits or equivalent traits identified by Peters. These include hiring and promoting wisely, balancing profit demands/news values, ensuring

fair/competitive salaries, and delivering fair discipline. Most of these traits such as hiring and promoting wisely, balancing profit demands/news values, and ensuring fair/competitive salaries have far less relevance in the college newsroom.

Unlike Peters' study, where professional journalists were given a list of traits or characteristics and asked to choose from that list, the panelists for this study were asked to identify the characteristics that made up a list. There were seven traits, Table 38, identified by the expert panel that do not appear on Peters' list of leadership competencies identified by professional journalists. That may not mean that professional journalists do not consider them important but Peters did not include them in her list of traits, or they may be more critical to college journalists. However, most of these traits or their equivalent, appear on the Kouzes and Posner list of most admired traits.

**Table 38. Leadership Characteristics Panel Members Identified That Do Not Appear in Peters' List for Professional Journalists**

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1. Creativity
2. Dedication to newspaper
3. Determination
4. Ability to interact with top college administrators
5. Ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism
6. Ability to remain calm under pressure
7. Admired their depth of knowledge of journalism

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Question 5 was asked in an effort to identify the ways panelists tried to emulate the competencies, skills, and behaviors they most admired in previous newsroom leaders. By identifying the practices they used in an effort to emulate admired leadership competencies. This helped facilitate the comparison of valued college newsroom practices to those identified as valuable by Kouzes and Posner for all leaders.

***Question 5:*** Give examples of ways you tried to emulate the leadership competencies you most admired in newsroom leaders before you became editor in chief or managing editor. (See Table 6, Question 5)

Panel members gave the following examples of ways they tried to emulate leadership competencies they most admired in previous newsroom leaders when they

became editor in chief or managing editor. These practices (Table 39) correspond to 11 of the 12 categories previously identified in Question 4.

Panelists' replies were in the following categories: leadership practices that demonstrated competence, offered encouragement, showed ability to inspire, showed ability to build a team, valued the staff's input, valued each staff member as an individual, dedication to the newspaper, communicated a vision, fostered a learning environment, showed creativity, and determination. Panelists did not specifically identify examples of courage in their replies concerning their own practices, although in question four they gave numerous examples of courage they admired in previous leaders. Some of the examples given by panelists are relevant to more than one category.

**Table 39. Practices Employed by Panelists to Emulate Admired Leadership Competencies in Previous College Newspaper Leaders**

Ways panelists tried to emulate the leadership competencies they admired in previous newsroom leaders once they were in the top newsroom leadership role.

<b>Leadership Practices that Demonstrate Competence</b>
1. Showed confidence in my decisions, was willing to have others disagree with me
2. Tried to know what I was doing
3. Made decision
4. Volunteered to do more duties without complaining
5. Improved the basics of newspaper production and journalism
6. Built respect and credibility from our readership
7. I had meetings three times a week
8. Isolated my anger and targeted the root of the problem
9. Did not show my anger, stress and disappointment
10. Practiced the art of negotiating
11. Watched other student leaders. I knew it was going to be a big commitment, and so I prepared myself by learning
12. Managed to keep my studies and everything else in my life in tact
13. Realized it was a crazy position of responsibility
14. Resolved problems in a professional manner
15. I tried to delegate responsibilities
16. Tried not to follow former leader's example
17. Brainstormed ways to improve
18. Ensured trust through establishing relationships
19. Learned from staff
20. Worked with all kinds of people
21. Earned respect and friendship

**Table 39. Continued**

<b>Leadership Practices that Showed Ability to Inspire</b>	
1.	Job was to make staff better able to do their jobs
2.	Showed staff the role they have in the paper and the rewards the job will have for them
3.	Took the job seriously, like it was a full-time job
4.	Modeled the love for journalism
5.	Demonstrated a passion for the cause (vision)
6.	I developed my passion for a solid newspaper from my editor
7.	Capture the spirit with words and images
8.	Inspired staff to come forward with good ideas
9.	Treated it like a real newsroom, a real job
10.	Balanced my responsibilities as a student with my responsibilities as an editor
11.	Tried to lead by setting a good example
<b>Leadership Practices that Demonstrated Encouragement</b>	
1.	Communicated to the staff mostly through e-mails about the great jobs they did
2.	Left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job
3.	Didn't discourage people who are really trying
4.	Told my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day
5.	Remembered to say thank you at all times
6.	Offering tokens of appreciation such as \$5 gift certificates
7.	Verbally recognized and gave credit for a job well done
8.	Voted on the best story and photo of the issue. I would make two certificates, one for them to keep and one that I posted in the newsroom
<b>Leadership Practices that Show Value for Each Staff Member as an Individual</b>	
1.	Remembered staffers by name
2.	Commented on the strengths of recent assignments
3.	Communicated on a daily basis with reporters about their work and workload
4.	I gave everyone on my staff a title/position other than just reporter (such as copy editor, photographer, layout, webmaster). It made them feel needed
5.	Held monthly individual evaluations with section editors
<b>Leadership Practices that Show Value for the Staff's Input</b>	
1.	Trusted in other people's opinions
2.	Encouraged staff during meetings to give complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts
3.	Listened to the staff and their ideas
4.	I listened
5.	By asking questions and using some of their ideas to incorporate with my own
<b>Leadership Practices that Showed Ability to Build a Team</b>	
1.	I tried to make the office an enjoyable place to work by having staff building chances outside of work
2.	We also went bowling and had sleepovers where we were allowed to just sit back, laugh and have fun
3.	Gave staffers the opportunity to get to know someone as a person and friend
4.	It also helped me delegate responsibilities and made us work together as a team because we needed every single person
5.	I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my advisor, advertising staff and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust.

**Table 39. Continued**

<b>Leadership Practices that Show Dedication to the Newspaper</b>	
1.	I brought us through two redesigns of the paper to our present and modern look. I feel that between the efforts of my staff, but mostly my managing editor, I have been able to bring the paper back to a student focus
2.	Willing to pull long hours and had plenty of patience
3.	Willing to put effort into the paper. Took the end product as a reflection of self
4.	Stayed until last pages were finished and looked over, and were the last to leave the office
5.	The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation time making changes to make the next semester even better
<b>Leadership Practices that Communicated a Vision</b>	
1.	We set goals for the paper as a whole and for each individual section
2.	Tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them
3.	Emulated papers regarded highly, not ones on your level
4.	Operate on the same level as a professional newspaper
5.	I think a key to have a successful college program is creating a leadership structure that will pull in students their freshman year and then prepare them for editor positions
<b>Leadership Practices that Fostered a Learning Environment</b>	
1.	Had workshops so the staff could sharpen their skills
2.	Taught skills to my staff
3.	Sent out emails listing advice on how he/she can improve on certain things
4.	I now train at workshops that we hold before each semester starts
<b>Leadership Practices that Showed Creativity</b>	
1.	I would make competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section
<b>Leadership Practices that Showed Determination</b>	
1.	Says a lot about those who can do it successfully while meeting other commitments
<b>Leadership Practices that Showed Courage</b>	
(no specific examples identified)	

### **Leadership Practices that Demonstrate Competence**

In category one, panelists' replies indicated they understand the nature and complexity of the role of editor in chief and that they model many of their leadership practices based on the behaviors of previous leaders. Most of the practices are examples of behaviors they held in high regard, tried to put into practice, and improve upon. In some cases, panelists cited behavior of former leaders as unprofessional and not worthy of emulation. In fact, they made an effort to model the opposite behavior.

Panelists emphasize the importance of leadership practices that demonstrate competence. An important competence is understanding the position as one that requires



enormous responsibility and commitment. They described it “as a crazy position of responsibility,” “a real job,” “hard work,” and “a big commitment” that requires the editor “to balance the responsibilities of school with the responsibilities of being editor.”

They cited examples of ways they emulated practices they observed in previous editors that showed commitment such as “volunteering” for tasks outside the editor’s job description or “staying until the last pages were finished” a practice one editor stated “is the least a staff member should expect of a leader.” Another editor reported he led his staff in pursuing the goals of the previous editor and initiated ways to continue to improve the newspaper, stating:

The aforementioned editor first had to focus on getting the basics of newspaper production and journalism improved and he was able to do that. Of course today we continue to focus on that, but we have now tried to follow his lead in creating a real structure to our staff and bringing together the other elements of journalism so that we build the respect and credibility from our readership.

The ability to make decisions and also be confident in those decisions was also cited by panelists as a practice they equate with the responsibility of being editor in chief. Before making decisions, one editor reported it is important to analyze the situation. This is how he described his position:

I simply tried to be confident and sure in my decisions, and be willing to have others disagree with me. There are many times when the staff will not agree with the decision of the managing editor or the editor in chief, and sometimes...a leader should step back from the decision, but sometimes the editor...should not let these disagreements sway him/her, if s/he knows the decision being made is the correct one, no matter how many disagreements are made. That...analysis of the situation is something very important, and it is something that I have tried to strengthen during my time as managing editor.

Another editor described the role of editor in chief as one that “largely consists of making decisions and showing you know what you are doing.”

One of the practices that aids in the decision making process and getting others to accept your decisions is by “learning to work with all kinds of people,” “earning the

staffs' respect," "realizing you can learn from the staff," and "ensuring trust by establishing relationships." When there are disagreements about decisions or other newsroom policies the panel offers practices that show a tactful and self-controlled approach as leadership skills that should be emulated. One described his approach in meetings with staff stating: "In editorial board meetings, when I sometimes found myself on the losing side of an argument, I tried and often succeeded in bringing other board members around to my point of view." Another editor stated:

I like to be easy to get along with, but yet let people know that they must do their work and get it done by deadline. As an editor, I don't like confrontation, but if it comes down to it, I make sure I do it quietly and not in front of the whole newsroom. Prior editors did the opposite, but I like to resolve problems in a professional manner.

One panelist cited learning self-control made leadership more effective. They stated:

The hardest thing for me to do was to not show my anger, stress and disappointment. But once I learned to isolate my anger and target the root of the problem, it made the job a lot easier for me.

Some panelists reported they did not try to emulate leadership practices of their former editors because they did not admire their former editor's behavior. They tried to develop leadership skills they thought these editors lacked. A panelist with three years experience as a reporter, but no previous newspaper leadership experience prior to taking the role of editor in chief, stated:

Since my previous editor hardly communicated with the staff or spent much time with the newspaper, I thought of things I wish she had done or implemented into her job and brainstormed ways to improve on that. I didn't so much emulate her leadership competencies as try to do the opposite of what I had experienced.

Another editor said she developed her passion for a solid newspaper from her previous editor, whom she described as "competent" in every aspect of journalism. However, she said what she learned from his leadership style was how "not to run my newsroom." She reported that he "wrote most of the lead stories, took the majority of

photos and created all the layouts.” She stated that it would “be kind you could say he led by example.” As editor she reported she “tried to delegate responsibilities” and “teach skills” to her staff.

In the following categories panelists offered many more examples of practices they learned from previous editors and tried to use to develop their own leadership skills in becoming more effective leaders. While some of the practices cited by panelists are relevant to more than one category, a recurring theme in all categories is the need for college newsroom leaders to model practices that encourage staff members, empower them to succeed, and provide them with a sense of purpose. Panelists emphasize the importance of leadership practices that demonstrate competence. It requires a wide range of competencies, skills, and behaviors, such as communicating, showing confidence, leading by example, demonstrating maturity, modeling a professional demeanor, demonstrating proactive behavior, and the ability to establish relationships.

### **Leadership Practices That Showed Ability to Inspire**

Kouzes and Posner (1997) state leaders must inspire people by acting as “cheerleaders” who encourage people to “sign up for the duration.” Panelists report they tried to inspire their staff’s by showing passion and enthusiasm for the job. They reported treating the newsroom “like a real newsroom” and taking the job seriously “like it was a full-time job.” He added, “If they don’t take it seriously, then the rest of the staff won’t really care about what they are doing as well.” One way to model this behavior, according to another editor is “by showing the staff how to “balance the responsibilities of school with their newspaper responsibilities”. One said her passion “for a solid newspaper” came from a former editor who “modeled the love for journalism—someone committed to the cause.” Another stated: “I also have tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them.” Another panelist reported he always encouraged the staff to come forward with “ideas, complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts.” This practice, he reported, resulted in people feeling comfortable coming to him with ideas. One editor who supervised a staff of 45 described college as a “time of

great promise and discovery.” He stated: “Speaking abstractly, an editor's aim should be to capture that spirit, to lasso it with words and images and hold it briefly—bucking and neighing—for daily consumption in newsprint.”

### **Leadership Practices That Demonstrated Encouragement**

Panelists’ responses in the next three categories indicate they place a high value on practices where the leader is encouraging, shows they value each staff member as an individual, and value each staff member’s input. These panelists were emphatic about the importance of a leader’s ability to offer encouragement to staff members because it helps people understand their significance to the newspaper and the significance of their individual contributions. They see encouragement as critical for students in a mostly volunteer organization. Panelists empathize with the students’ plight to manage their responsibilities as staff members and students and see encouragement and recognition as critical to helping them succeed in both roles. The behaviors they emulated and practiced as editors were sometimes as simple as “remembering to say thank you.” Some editors, however, gave more impassioned examples stating:

I’ve always tried to tell my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day and that they are what makes the newspaper special. I think we’ve translated that into reader-centered coverage goals as well. I’ve taken the approach that my job is to make them more able to do their jobs. And I always give people a day off when they need it; it's no use having someone overstressed in the office and it just breeds poor morale.

They also placed importance on both public and private recognition of staff member’s accomplishments. Examples included writing notes each week to those “doing an exceptional job,” sending e-mails to staff “about the great jobs they did,” and “increasing staff morale by offering tokens of appreciation such as \$5 gift certificates.” One editor stated: “At our staff meetings we would vote on the best story and photo of the issue. I would make two certificates, one for them to keep and one that I posted in the newsroom.”

Panelists cited several examples of practices they used to show individual staff members they were valued. Again, some of the behaviors they emulated and admired in former leaders were as simple as remembering staff members by name, a leadership skill that one panelist remembered from her first year on staff and implemented when she became top newsroom leader. She added that she “also tried to remember ... to comment on the strengths of their recent assignments.” Another editor explained: “I tried to spend more time speaking to reporters and copy editors during the work day to find out how their day was going, how busy they were and any problems with their work I could assist with.” Other panelists cited holding “monthly individual evaluations with section editors” and “giving everyone on staff a title or position” in addition to reporter, because “it made them feel needed.”

Panelists also placed a high value on leaders who make a sincere effort to consider the staff’s input. In particular, they admire the ability of leaders to listen to their staff’s ideas and recommendations. A panelist who supervised a staff of 75 students reported that it is important for an editor to make time to listen to staff members and to consider their opinions. She stated:

I listened. No matter how busy I was with the daily operations, I made time to listen to people who took time to sit in my office and offer a suggestion. It’s easy to get wrapped up in the chaos at a newsroom, but you need to be able to evaluate your performance and trust in other people’s opinions.

Other panelists also cited examples of practicing the art of “active listening” and appear to understand the ability to listen as an important leadership skill. Geisler (2000) states that leaders initiate the process of “active listening” when they “invite the speaker to tell them more by asking questions in an encouraging way” (p. 13).

A panelist who supervised a staff of 40 reported that during his years as a staff member, the leadership skill he most admired in top newsroom leaders was their ability to listen, stating:

People have ideas all the time. Some of them are good, some of them not so good, others bad. But if the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution.

As editor in chief he emulated that practice by encouraging “active listening” in meetings he held three times a week with his member staff. He described the meetings, stating:

I went around the room and listened to ideas. I think I always said, 'Any ideas, complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts you need to share'. Sometimes the best ideas came out of that. People felt comfortable coming to me with ideas. They knew I would listen. Also, if an idea was not so good, or even bad, I would try to find a way to tweak it a little bit and make it a better idea. That way, I didn't discourage people who were really trying.

This panelist reported four years experience as a reporter, but no previous newsroom leadership experience.

### **Leadership Practices That Showed Ability to Build a Team**

The examples of “making people feel needed” “trusting in other people’s opinions” and practicing “active listening” are tools panelist report they used to facilitate teambuilding, another practice they cite as important to effective leadership. The panelist who reported she gave everyone on her staff a title or position in addition to reporter citing that “it made them feel needed.” She also stated: “It also helped me delegate responsibilities and made us work together as a team because we needed every single person.” Building trust was also cited as an important practice for the leader who is, if by title only, the team leader. One editor explained: “I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my adviser, advertising staff and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust.” Several panelists cited team building exercises they used to increase staff participation and improve the overall comfort level in their newsrooms. An editor who supervised a staff of 60 stated: “I tried to make the office an enjoyable place to work by having staff building chances outside of work. These gave staffers the opportunity to get to know someone...as a person and friend.” Another editor offered these examples of teambuilding, stating: “We also went bowling and had sleepovers where we were allowed to just sit back, laugh and have fun.”

### **Leadership Practices That Show Dedication to the Newspaper**

Panelists also indicated they practiced behaviors that showed their dedication to the newspaper. They indicate that an editor's dedication is a behavior they admired in previous leaders and tried to model in their leadership positions. Panelists explained that the editor must be "someone willing to pull long hours and have plenty of patience," and is "willing to put effort into the paper." One editor emphasized that the newspaper is not something to be taken lightly, stating:

The information you put out affects the opinions and thoughts of a lot of people.

The end product is a reflection of you. If you work hard, it shows. You get better results if you work hard...People will notice.

Another editor described her dedication to her publication, but added she was disappointed by comments from people in the campus community. She stated:

The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation making changes to make the next semester even better. Students and faculty members on the campus do not understand this, and to hear their negative comments after only getting two hours sleep because of problems just hurts a lot.

One panelist reported observing former editors who regarded their duties as "simply to come in on publication day(s) and look at the paper for five minutes, then say 'Okay, whatever,' and walk out." Staff members "should expect more of those figures," he reported, "than having some offhanded association with the process." He cited this as a common occurrence when he first began work at the newspaper. However, that changed when, he reported:

The editor in chief and I both began a habit of staying until the last pages were finished, and looked over, and were the last to leave the office. In the three years since then, it has become the common practice...and the old habit has never even been considered. In fact, this technique has led to more involvement in the correction process among other members of the editorial staff. While, at first, it was the editor in chief and myself who made the corrections and changes, now most editors feel obligated to remain and make final changes to their sections.

Any newspaper staff should expect the editor in chief and/or managing editor to remain until the newspaper is finished, so they know what has happened and what is going out.

### **Leadership Practices That Communicated a Vision**

The previous response indicates the panelist and his predecessor implemented a plan to improve the editors' leadership skills with the idea that it would have long-ranging impact on the newspaper and its staff. They modeled the behavior they wanted to see in those who followed. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that leaders must be able to communicate a vision, "a sense of direction and a sense of the future of the organization." "Leaders" they state, "must know where they are going if they expect others to join them in the journey" (p. 23). Other panelists also offered similar examples of realizing short and long term goals or visions for their staffs and newspapers. One panelist stated:

I brought us through two redesigns of the paper to our present and modern look. I feel that between the efforts of my staff, but mostly my managing editor, I have been able to bring the paper back to a student focus. I have changed the assignment sheets and deadlines to make this a better publication.

Another editor stated that she included the staff when developing goals, stating: "We set goals for the paper as a whole and for each individual section." She added: "During evaluations, we would determine how close we were to achieving these goals." Some panelists emphasized that college journalists should think of themselves as professional journalists and should set goals for their newspapers using professional standards. One editor stated: "Don't call your paper a student newspaper. It is a professional newspaper run by students. Therefore the staff must conduct themselves as such. Compare yourselves to papers that you emulate not that are on your level." Another panelist agreed, stating: "A student newspaper should operate on the same level as a professional paper."

Panelists also emphasized the importance of editors knowing the rewards, both short and long term, of working for a college newspaper. It helps inspire them to meet



goals. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state: “Leaders must inspire our confidence in the validity of the goal. Enthusiasm and excitement are essential and signal the leader's personal commitment to pursuing that goal” (p.24). An editor with four years experience who supervised a staff of 60 people stated: “I tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best newspaper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them.” Panelists seem to agree the hard work is justified. One stated: “College editors should recognize that having a school newspaper provides them with a solid foundation in journalism and allows a smoother transition to professional journalism.” Another stated:

Holding the top position on a newspaper staff trains you in the areas of leadership and management, and improves your journalism skills. While it was the most stressful position I have ever held, it was also the most valuable experience I have had to date.

### **Leadership Practices That Fostered a Learning Environment**

Previous examples of teambuilding, valuing each staff member as an individual, and valuing the staff's input are evidence that panelists tried to provide an environment that fostered learning. Many of the panels' examples of good leadership practices also show an understanding of the need to pass along important skills to current and new staff members who aspire to become better journalists and leaders. A few cited practices they followed to train staff members and practices they thought might help to better prepare people for leadership positions. One of the biggest misconceptions panelists cited about their newsroom leadership roles was the amount of training required for staff members. Most student journalists are still honing their own skills, as journalists and leaders, when they accept the top newsroom role. One editor stated: “Upon advancing my skills, I now train at workshops that we hold before each semester starts.” Another editor also reported holding workshops “so the staff could sharpen their skills.” Two others reported teaching skills to their staffs by delegating responsibilities and by sending out e-mails listing advice on how to improve. One panelist offered advice on preparing new staff members for future leadership positions stating:

Newsroom leadership is not as structured as leadership in professional newsrooms. I think a key to having a successful college program is creating a leadership structure that will pull in students their freshman year and then prepare them for editor positions.

### **Leadership Practices That Showed Creativity**

One editor cited ways she tried to promote skills development and encourage new ideas, stating: “I made competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section. When we started using color on the front and back, I started taking bids for the back page also.”

### **Leadership Practices That Showed Determination**

One panel-member, explained the tenacity and resolve it takes to succeed as an editor stating: “It’s a crazy position of responsibility to be in at the age of 20, or whatever, and it says a lot about those who can do it successfully while meeting their other commitments.”

### **Leadership Practices: Student Newsroom Leaders Compared to All Leaders**

The expert panel identified ways they used their experiences with previous leaders to develop and model their own leadership behavior and practices when they were in the top newsroom leadership roles. They described fundamental practices that helped them to succeed in bringing about change, to realize goals, encourage and inspire others, become stronger role models, and recognize accomplishments of the staff. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that there are five fundamental practices or behaviors that serve as the basis for helping leaders to develop as they are “learning to lead.” Those five practices include challenging the process, encouraging the heart, modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and enabling others to act. These practices they state “have stood the test of time” and were common to leaders who have achieved extraordinary success. Many of the panelists’ responses (Table 40) exemplify the practices that Kouzes and Posner call the “Ten Commitments of Leadership.” Indeed, some of the examples given by panelists are relevant to more than one category.

**Table 40. Expert Panel's Leadership Practices Compared to Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices**

Five Fundamental Practices of Exemplary Leadership and the Ten Commitments of Leadership	
Challenging the Process (Practice)	
Commitments:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve</li> <li>2. Experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes</li> </ol>	
<b>Examples of Practices the Panel Used that Show Challenging the Process</b>	
<p><i>"I would make competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section. When we started using color on the front and back, I started taking bids for the back page also"</i></p> <p><i>"It's important to simply recognize that a great leader isn't just born. It doesn't just happen. It takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader"</i></p> <p><i>"Since my previous editor hardly communicated with the staff or spent much time with the newspaper, I thought of things I wish she had done or implemented into her job and brainstormed ways to improve on that"</i></p>	
Encouraging the Heart (Practice)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project</li> <li>4. Celebrate team accomplishments regularly</li> </ol>	
<b>Examples of Practices the Panel Used that Show Encouraging the Heart</b>	
<p><i>"Student newsroom leaders must be willing to work with others and learn from others but must always lead by example in their work ethic on how they want their employees to work"</i></p> <p><i>"At our staff meetings we would vote on the best story and photo of the issue. I would make two certificates, one for them to keep and one that I posted in the newsroom"</i></p> <p><i>"I've always tried to tell my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day and that they are what makes the newspaper special"</i></p> <p><i>"Communicated to the staff mostly through e-mails about the great jobs they did either for the semester or on a certain issue. Always kept staff up-to-date on when the newspaper's Website was updated as well as getting reports for the number of hits their articles received in case he/she might be interested. Sent out e-mails listing advice on how he/she can improve on certain things"</i></p>	
Modeling the Way (Practice)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Set the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values</li> <li>6. Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment</li> </ol>	
<b>Examples of Practices the Panel Used that Show Modeling the Way (3,7,8)</b>	
<p><i>"I also left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job and tried to always volunteer to do more than more duties without complaining to set a good example"</i></p> <p><i>"I like to be easy to get along with, but yet let people know that they must do their work and get it done by deadline. As an editor, I don't like confrontation, but if it comes down to it, I make sure I do it quietly and not in front of the whole newsroom. Prior editors did the opposite, but I like to resolve problems in a professional manner"</i></p>	

**Table 40. Continued**

<b>Inspiring a Shared Vision (Practice)</b>	
7.	Envision an uplifting and ennobling future
8.	Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams
<b><i>Examples of Practices the Panel Used that Show Inspiring a Shared Vision</i></b>	
<i>"I also have tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them"</i>	
<i>"Creating a real structure to our staff and bringing together the other elements of journalism so that we build the respect and credibility from our readership"</i>	
<i>"Newsroom leadership is not as structured as leadership in professional newsrooms. I think a key to have a successful college program is creating a leadership structure that will pull in students their freshman year and then prepare them for editor positions"</i>	
<b>Enabling Others to Act (Practice)</b>	
9.	Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
10.	Strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support
<b><i>Examples of Practices the Panel Used that Show Enabling Others to Act</i></b>	
<i>"I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my advisor, advertising staff and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust"</i>	
<i>"My biggest learning experience this semester has been in my interaction with other managers and leaders at the paper. Through many opportunities, I have learned when I need to step up myself, and take on extra work or help someone finish his or her job. I have also learned when to delegate a task to another staffer, and allow him or her to do the work. Doing this, I have learned, is a great way to show trust in coworkers"</i>	
<i>"I tried to spend more time speaking to reporters and copy editors during the work day to find out how their day was going, how busy they were and any problems with their work I could assist with"</i>	
<i>"I tried to delegate responsibilities"</i>	

Source: Adapted from James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, pp.8-18, 1997.

Panelists' responses in the categories in Table 40 that describe competence, creativity, and determination are similar to practices Kouzes and Posner describe in "Challenging the Process." One editor in chief of a weekly, who supervises a staff of 25, described the complex nature of the role college editors have as students and editors stating: "It's a crazy position of responsibility to be in at the age of 20, or whatever, and it says a lot about those who can do it successfully while meeting their other commitments." The ability to balance responsibilities that accompany the job of top newsroom leader with the responsibilities of school was emphasized by other panelists as well. An editor of a weekly stated:

I have become very good at balancing my responsibilities as a student with my responsibilities as an editor. I knew coming into the job (though watching other student leaders) that it was going to be a big commitment, and so I prepared myself for whatever challenges came my way.

Another editor who supervises a staff of 15-20 people stated:

It is a real newsroom, it is a real job. The publication does not just make itself...I do not get much sleep...but manage to keep my studies and everything else in my life in tact. It is real and a real experience. I get phone calls at 4 a.m. telling me there is a problem. I have to fix it.

In spite of panelists' descriptions of this position as one of onerous responsibilities, they none-the-less offered ways they went beyond simply balancing their responsibilities to practices where they encouraged change and took risks. Kouzes and Posner (1995) refer to these as practices that "challenged the process." Sometimes the change was in their personal leadership style or sometimes it was in the status quo associated with the newsroom or the staff. An editor of a weekly, who supervises a staff of 20 stated: "Since my previous editor hardly communicated with the staff or spent much time with the newspaper, I thought of things I wish she had done or implemented into her job and brainstormed ways to improve on that." An editor of a newspaper published three times a week described innovative leadership practices she used to encourage her staff to improve the newspaper. She stated:

I would make competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section. When we started using color on the front and back, I started taking bids for the back page also.

Panelists cited examples of examining their own behavior as an important step in challenging the process. One editor observed: "It's easy to get wrapped up in the chaos at a newsroom, but you need to be able to evaluate your performance." One editor stated that she did not emulate the behavior of former editors, because she wanted to model what she considered to be more professional behavior, as it related to her interaction with the staff. She stated:

I like to be easy to get along with, but yet let people know that they must do their work and get it done by deadline. As an editor, I don't like confrontation, but if it comes down to it, I make sure I do it quietly and not in front of the whole newsroom. Prior editors did the opposite, but I like to resolve problems in a professional manner.

Another editor offered this example of self-reflection, stating:

The hardest thing for me to do was to not show my anger, stress and disappointment. But once I learned to isolate my anger and target the root of the problem, it made the job a lot easier for me.

Learning to work with others was also cited by another editor as an important leadership skill. She stated:

Student leaders need to be prepared to work with people – all kinds of people. Notice how I say work with? It is important to know that you must work together with your staff. If you think that you're the boss and you call all the shots, you will not have a productive newsroom. But if you enter the job accepting the fact that it is a learning experience for you as well, you'll realize that even though you have the highest position in the newsroom, you have a lot to learn from your staff.

And those relationships cannot be taken for granted according to one panelist who stated:

I have tried to earn both respect and friendship (since I was already friends with most of the staff, this proved fairly easy), and to develop my leadership skills, because leading is not something I have ever been particularly comfortable with. I've found that leadership largely consists of making decisions and showing that you know what you are doing (or at least look like you do).

The necessity for making decisions was also cited by other panelists as an important function of the leadership role. An editor of a daily, who supervises a staff of 60, stated:

I simply tried to be confident and sure in my decisions, and be willing to have others disagree with me. There are many times when the staff will not agree with

the decision of the managing editor or the editor in chief, and sometimes, it is true, a leader should step back from the decision, but sometimes the editor in chief or managing editor should not let these disagreements sway him or her, if he or she knows the decision being made is the correct one, no matter how many disagreements are made. That sort of analysis of the situation is something very important, and it is something that I have tried to strengthen during my time as managing editor.

Panelists cited the ability to negotiate and persuade as skills they used in learning to lead—ones they learned from previous editors. One panelist stated: “In editorial board meetings, when I sometimes found myself on the losing side of an argument, I tried and often succeeded in bringing other board members around to my point of view.” Another editor cited using her skill to rebuild relationships a former editor had damaged, stating: “I have continued to mend fences with organizations and people on campus that were destroyed.” She added: “I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my advisor, advertising staff, and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust.”

Finally, they offered examples of ways they modeled behavior they admired and hoped would set an example for their staffs. One editor stated:

I tried to spend more time speaking to reporters and copy editors during the work day to find out how their day was going, how busy they were and any problems with their work I could assist with. I also left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job and tried to always volunteer to do more than more duties without complaining to set a good example.

An editor of a weekly, who supervises a staff of 40, described how he and his staff emulated the previous editor who challenged the process by working to improve the basics of newspaper production and journalism. In addition to continuing to work toward these goals, they sought ways to make additional improvements. The panelist stated: “We have now tried to follow his lead in creating a real structure to our staff and bringing together the other elements of journalism so that we build the respect and credibility from our readership.”

These panelists were emphatic about the leader's ability to "Encourage the Heart" of staff members by recognizing individual accomplishments and placing a high value on each person's input. They see encouragement as critical for students in a mostly volunteer organization. Their responses for several categories (Table 38) are similar to practices Kouzes and Posner describe for "encouraging the heart." This recognition begins with remembering simple everyday courtesies such as saying "thank you," to public recognition of good work during meetings.

An editor with three years experience at a large public university daily who supervises a staff of 100 stated: "I've always tried to tell my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day and that they are what makes the newspaper special." An editor of a bi-weekly newspaper at a community college who supervises a staff of 20 stated:

Communicated to the staff mostly through e-mails about the great jobs they did either for the semester or on a certain issue. I always kept staff up-to-date on when the newspaper's Website was updated, as well as getting reports for the number of hits their articles received in case he or she might be interested. I sent out e-mails listing advice on how he or she could improve on certain things.

In an effort to emulate an editor she admired her freshman year, a former editor of a daily at a large public institution stated: "I tried to remember staffers by name, and to comment on the strengths of their recent assignments."

One of the two panelists, who served as managing editor at the time of the study and who was preparing to move into the editor in chief position, stated:

I tried to spend more time speaking to reporters and copy editors during the work day to find out how their day was going, how busy they were and any problems with their work I could assist with. I also left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job.

This editor also reported in her responses to question eight that early in her tenure she did not realize that her position as a managing editor was a leadership position and did not "recognize how important leadership skills would be and how much of an influence they would make." Another example of this student leader practicing



leadership skills that “encourage the heart” included giving everyone on staff a title or position in addition to that of reporter such as copy editor, photographer, layout designer, or Webmaster. She stated she did this in an effort to “make them feel needed.” An editor stated she tried to emulate the leadership competencies she admired by holding “monthly individual evaluations with section editors.”

Panelists also indicated public recognition of accomplishments was also important during weekly staff meetings. One panelist reported she “Increased staff morale by offering tokens of appreciation such as \$5 gift certificates.” Another editor gave certificates for the best story and photo of the issue. She made one for the staff member to keep and one that she posted in the newsroom.

Panelists cited examples of practicing the art of “active listening” and appear to understand the ability to listen as an important leadership skill that “encourages the heart.” Geisler (2000) states that leaders initiate the process of “active listening” when they “invite the speaker to tell them more by asking questions in an encouraging way” (p. 13).

A former editor in chief of a twice-weekly publication at a mid-size public university described how he encouraged participation and practiced “active listening” in meetings he held three times a week with his 40-member staff. He stated:

In each meeting ... I went around the room and listened to ideas. I think I always said, 'Any ideas, complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts you need to share'. Sometimes the best ideas came out of that. People felt comfortable coming to me with ideas. They knew I would listen. Also, if an idea was not so good, or even bad, I would try to find a way to tweak it a little bit and make it a better idea. That way, I didn't discourage people who were really trying.

This panelist reported four years experience as a reporter, but no previous newsroom leadership experience. However, he did report that during his years as a staff member, the leadership skill he most admired in top newsroom leaders was their ability to listen, stating: “People have ideas all the time. Some of them are good, some of them not so good, others bad. But if the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution.” Another editor in chief also emphasized

the importance of listening as a leadership skill. She supervised a staff of 75 students as editor of a newspaper published three times a week. She stated: “I listened. No matter how busy I was with the daily operations, I made time to listen to people who took time to sit in my office and offer a suggestion. It’s easy to get wrapped up in the chaos at a newsroom, but you need to be able to evaluate your performance and trust in other people's opinions.” Another editor emphasized the importance of leading by example, stating: “Student newsroom leaders must be willing to work with others and learn from others but must always lead by example in their work ethic on how they want their employees to work.”

The practices these panelists followed as top newsroom leaders shows their attempt to “Model the Way” by modeling the behavior they admired or, in some cases, thought were lacking in leaders they had previously served under. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that the leader's behavior is what wins them success. These leadership experts state: “Leaders go first. They set an example and build commitment through simple, daily acts that create progress and momentum (p. 13).” The leaders’ actions, they state, are more significant than their words. These actions or behaviors are necessary for the leader to unite followers to follow their lead in pursuing common visions and goals. Their responses imply they understand that having a vision and having the ability to inspire others to work toward achieving that vision go hand in hand. Panelists’ replies indicate they understood the value of “Inspiring a Shared Vision.” They offer examples of setting goals and taking the responsibility for helping their staffs understand and embrace those goals. An editor from a small liberal arts college who supervised a staff of 40 stated that his former editor's goal was to “improve the basics of newspaper production and journalism” and was able to accomplish that goal. When he became editor in chief he reported he continued to pursue that vision, stating: “We continue to focus on that, but we have now tried to follow his lead in creating a real structure to our staff and bringing together the other elements of journalism so that we build the respect and credibility from our readership.”

Two panelists emphasized the importance of college journalists thinking of themselves as professional journalists and holding the same standards, regardless of the

fact that they were a student publication. One panelist with seven years experience admonished leaders not to refer to their publications as student newspapers. She stated: “It’s a professional newspaper run by students. Therefore the staff must conduct themselves as such. Compare yourselves to papers you emulate not that are on your level.” As editor in chief she made goal-setting a priority with her staff. She stated: “We set goals for the paper as a whole and for each individual section. During evaluations we would determine how close we were to achieving those goals.” Another editor echoed her opinion concerning setting professional standards and goals, stating: “A student newspaper should operate on the same level as a professional paper. College editors should recognize that having a school newspaper provides them with a solid foundation in journalism and allows a smoother transition to professional journalism.”

Producing a high-quality newspaper was also the vision for another editor who supervised a college daily staff of 60 people. He stated: “I tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them.”

Other editors described the leaders' passion for their jobs and their goals as being a key element in their ability to inspire others. A former editor from a small church-related university stated that her standard for quality journalism was the result of her predecessor's enthusiasm for the college newspaper. She stated:

I developed my passion for a solid newspaper from my editor. In my experience the job of college editor needs to be taken on by someone committed to the cause. The job is way more involved and taxing than the stipend or recognition covers. The person that accepts the job needs to love the challenges of journalism.

Several editors emphasized that the role of top newsroom leader should be viewed as a full-time position; one that must be taken seriously if the leader expects to inspire others to share their goals. While balancing a full-time position and school can be challenging, they report that it can be inspiring to staff members when the editor takes the role seriously and shows the dedication and determination to see it through. One editor stated: “They should take the job as editor seriously like this was their actual full-

time job. If they don't take it seriously, then the rest of the staff won't really care about what they are doing as well.” Another panelist agreed, stating:

It is a real newsroom, it is a real job. The publication does not just make itself. It takes the work of 15-20 people to get it out. I do not get much sleep...but manage to keep my studies and everything else in my life in tact. It is real and a real experience. I get phone calls at 4 a.m. telling me there is a problem. I have to fix it.

The role requires dedication and editors gave examples of ways they put that into practice. One stated: “The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation time making changes to make the next semester even better.” Another stated: “You have to be someone willing to pull long hours and have plenty of patience.” These are situations editors should expect according to an editor from another small liberal arts university. She stated:

I knew coming into the job (though watching other student leaders) that it was going to be a big commitment, and so I prepared myself for whatever challenges came my way. I have become very good at balancing my responsibilities as a student with my responsibilities as an editor.

A managing editor with seven years experience, who helps supervise a staff of 45, described the passion and inspiration that should come from the top newsroom leader stating: “College is a time of great promise and discovery. Speaking abstractly, an editor’s aim should be to capture that spirit, to lasso it with words and images and hold it briefly—bucking and neighing—for daily consumption in newsprint.” Another described the power the editor has to inspire change stating: “I’ve taken the approach that my job is to make them more able to do their jobs. I think we’ve translated that into 'reader-centered coverage goals' as well.” He showed empathy for their attempts to balance school and their commitments to the newspaper by stating: “I always give people a day off when they need it; it’s no use having someone overstressed in the office and it just breeds poor morale.” One editor described the improvements she inspired her staff to achieve stating:

I brought us through two redesigns of the paper to our present and modern look. I feel that between the efforts of my staff but mostly my managing editor, I have been able to bring the paper back to a student focus. I have changed the assignment sheets and deadlines to make this a better publication.

Two panelists offered examples of editors' behavior they cite as failing to inspire achievement and development in their staffs. These editors were either disengaged from their staff members or modeled controlling behavior that discouraged participation. They indicate staff members should expect more from their leaders. One stated:

Anyone who thinks the duty of an editor in chief or managing editor is simply to come in on publication day(s) and look at the paper for five minutes, then say 'Okay, whatever,' and walk out, should really expect more of those figures. While those previous to myself and the editor in chief when I began would often do this, the editor in chief and I both began a habit of staying until the last pages were finished, and looked over, and were the last to leave the office. In the three years since then, it has become the common practice among myself and subsequent editors in chief, and the old habit has never even been considered. In fact, this technique has led to more involvement in the correction process among the other members of the editorial staff, as well. While, at first, it was the editor in chief and myself who made the corrections and changes, now most editors feel obligated to remain and make their own final changes to their sections. Any newspaper staff, it seems, should expect their editor in chief and/or managing editor to at least remain until the newspaper is finished, so that they actually know what has happened and what is going out, it seems, rather than having some offhanded association with the process.

Another editor offered a similar experience stating:

While I admired the competence of my editor, what I really took away from his leadership was how I did not want to run my newsroom. In my

opinion, my editor did not think anyone was as zealous about the paper as he was so he took on everything himself. My editor wrote most of the lead stories, took the majority of photos and created all the layouts. To be kind you could say he led by example. On the other hand, I tried to delegate responsibilities and teach skills to my staff.

This editor's response indicates she understood the importance of what Kouzes and Posner call "Enabling Others to Act." They explain that "Leaders enable others to act not by hoarding the power they have but by giving it away. When people have more discretion, more authority, and information, they're much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results" (p.12). Kouzes and Posner state that leaders who are successful in "enabling others to act" do so through teamwork, trust, and empowerment.

One panelist with three years experience, who supervises a staff of 100, explained his perspective on the college newsroom experience for students stating:

A student paper is many things, and one of those is a learning experience. The sheet of paper that comes out every day you will likely not remember in 20 years or even next week. You will remember the experiences and especially the people, and I think that's the only way to approach management of a student paper; with emphasis on the people you work with, your staff, and the people you work for, your readers.

Panelists gave examples of leadership practices that demonstrated they valued and tried to emulate teambuilding practices experts state are critical in enabling others to act. A panelist with a staff of 33 provided opportunities such as "bowling and sleepovers to allow the staff to just sit back, laugh and have fun." Another panelist stated:

I tried to make the office an enjoyable place to work by having staff building chances outside of work. These gave staffers the opportunity to get to know someone as more than the news editor, and as a person and friend.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that "as organizational members interact on more than just a professional level, they're likely to come to care about one another" (p. 301).

The authors cite a 10-year study that maintains that “social support networks are essential for sustaining servers' motivation to serve: 'Coworkers who support each other and achieve together can be an antidote to service burnout'“(p. 302). Student newsroom leaders appear to rely on teambuilding to help mobilize their primarily volunteer staffs to want to serve, an essential leadership skill according to Kouzes and Posner. Another panelist cited “working as a team” as critical because she “needed every single person” on her 15-member staff to produce a monthly publication.

Panelists also cited building trust as an important element of teambuilding. One editor stated: “I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my advisor, advertising staff and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust.” Another editor who emphasized the importance of building trust through establishing rapport, stated:

My biggest learning experience this semester has been in my interaction with other managers and leaders at the paper. Through many opportunities, I have learned when I need to step up myself, and take on extra work or help someone finish his or her job. I have also learned when to delegate a task to another staffer, and allow him or her to do the work. Doing this, I have learned, is a great way to show trust in coworkers.

Kouzes and Posner state that leaders build trust with workers when they “give away power” and “develop competence.” Other panelists offered examples of this leadership behavior. One editor stated she tried to delegate responsibilities while also trying to teach skills to her staff. Another offered a specific example stating: “When a senior staff member left the paper, I made and carried out a plan to get other staffers involved to fill her role.” Another panelist stated she held workshops so the staff could sharpen their skills. One reported that she now trains at workshops held at the beginning of each semester.

When the list of panelists' responses to Question 4 are compared to their responses in Question 5 (Table 41) there is evidence that these editors made an effort to emulate the leadership competencies they said they admired in top newsroom leaders when they moved into that role. Panelists emphasized that top newsroom leaders had had

a significant impact on them as staff members when they offered encouragement. They gave many examples of ways they tried to emulate this practice when

**Question 4:** *Before becoming editor in chief or managing editor, what leadership competencies did you most admire in student newsroom leaders?*

**Question 5:** *Give examples of ways you tried to emulate the leadership competencies you most admired in newsroom leaders when you became editor in chief or managing editor.*

they became editor in chief. For example, they used e-mail or personal notes to tell them they did a “great,” or “exceptional job.” Many expressed the importance of publicly recognizing staff members who had done a good job. One editor said she had the staff vote on the best story and photo of the issue and then made certificates, one for the winner and a copy to be posted in the newsroom. Another editor recognized deserving staff members with \$5 gift certificates. The examples ranged from several editors emphasizing that they tried to remember to say thank you at all times to one panelist saying he told his staff at every opportunity that they were the reason he showed up everyday. Panelists also indicated they admired leaders who “gave those eager to participate a chance.” And they do not admire leaders who “discourage those who are really trying.” In all seven of the areas previously identified, panelists gave numerous examples of how they emulated leadership practices they admired.

The traits that panelists said they admired in leaders and tried to emulate fell into the following 12 categories: leaders who

1. Offered encouragement
2. Fostered a learning environment
3. Valued the staff’s input
4. Valued each staff member as an individual
5. Demonstrated competence
6. Demonstrated ability to build a team
7. Vision
8. Inspiring
9. Dedication to newspaper



10. Courageous

11. Creative

12. Determined

The panelist's responses to Question 4 established the leadership characteristics they admired in leaders prior to serving in the top position. Their responses to Question 5 indicated ways they tried to emulate or put into practice those characteristics they previously admired.

**Table 41. Comparison of Admired Leadership Competencies and the Ways Panelists Tried to Emulate Those Admired Competencies**

Leadership competencies panelists most admired in student newsroom leaders prior to their experience as top newsroom leader.	Ways editors tried to emulate the leadership competencies they most admired when they became editor in chief or managing editor.
<b>Offered Encouragement</b>	<b>Offered Encouragement</b>
1. Giving those eager to participate a chance	1. Communicated to the staff mostly through e-mails about the great jobs they did
2. Always helpful	2. Left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job
3. I admire the ability to praise the staff	3. Don't discourage people who are really trying.
	4. Tell my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day
	5. Remembered to say thank you at all times
	6. Offering tokens of appreciation such as \$5 gift certificates
	7. Verbally recognize and give credit for a job well done
	8. Vote on the best story and photo of the issue. I would make two certificates, one for them to keep and one that I posted in the newsroom
	9. Held monthly individual evaluations with section editors
<b>Fostered a Learning Environment</b>	<b>Fostered a Learning Environment</b>
1. Dedication and ability to train and mentor staff	1. Had workshops so the staff could sharpen their skills
2. Devotion to staff and its success	2. Teach skills to my staff
3. Editors before me emphasized most that what you learn in the classroom supplements what you learn working on a newspaper	3. Sent out e-mails listing advice on how he/she can improve on certain things
4. No question is a stupid question	4. I now train at workshops that we hold before each semester starts
5. Ability to teach	
6. Always available to train or mentor staff members	
7. Devotion to training	
8. An ability to truly teach others	

**Table 41. Continued**

<b>Valued the Staff's Input</b>	<b>Valued the Staff's Input</b>
1. The editor valued the ideas and opinions of every writer, designer, etc.	1. Trust in other people's opinions
2. Listened	2. Encouraged staff during meetings to give complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts
3. If the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution	3. Listened to the staff and their ideas
4. One person's ideas get bland and tiresome. If more people's ideas are being used, it gives the paper a sense of liveliness	4. I listened
5. Interacted with everyone to make sure all voices were heard	5. By asking questions and using some of their ideas to incorporate with my own
<b>Valued Each Staff Member as an Individual</b>	<b>Valued Each Staff Member as an Individual</b>
1. Always treated everyone respectfully and as an equal	1. Remembered staffers by name
2. She remembered names	2. Commented on the strengths of their recent assignments
3. Referred to recent copy I'd written	3. Communicated on a daily basis with reporters about their work and workload
4. Commented on recent copy I had written	4. I gave everyone on my staff a title/position other than just reporter (such as copy editor, photographer, layout, webmaster). It made them feel needed
5. People feel as though they are being respected, they are willing to take part in the creative process	
6. The ones I admired seemed to care not just about the sheet of paper but about the staff and the people they worked with	
<b>Demonstrated Competence</b>	<b>Demonstrated Competence</b>
1. She was truly a role model	1. I simply tried to be confident and sure in my decisions
2. Admired their communication skills	2. Must know what you are doing
3. Knowledgeable	3. Must make decisions
4. A strong knowledge of and ability to perform any of the functions on staff	4. Volunteer to do more duties without complaining
5. Admired their depth of knowledge of journalism	5. I tried to lead by setting a good example
6. Admired their journalism skills	6. Improved the basics of newspaper production and journalism
7. Good insights into journalism	7. Built respect and credibility from our readership
8. Understood task at hand	8. I had meetings three times a week
9. I admired the relationship they had with our adviser	9. Isolate my anger and target the root of the problem, not show my anger, stress and disappointment
10. Encouraged and accepted change	10. The art of negotiating

**Table 41. Continued**

11. They were for change and they wanted change	11. Though watching other student leaders I knew it was going to be a big commitment, and so I prepared myself for whatever challenges I might face
12. Having a new adviser who wanted change and was looking to make a difference was a positive thing	12. I simply tried to be confident and sure in my decisions, and be willing to have others disagree with me
13. Ability to remain calm under pressure (even admired when it was a weakness)	13. Learned to balance my responsibilities as a student with my responsibilities as an editor
14. Ability to interact with top college administrators	14. I resolve problems in a professional manner
15. Their ability to plan well	15. I tried to delegate responsibilities
16. Admired a leader who would fill in for other editors when they wanted to take a day off	16. Brainstormed ways to improve
17. Ability to perform any of the functions of staff	17. Ensure trust through establishing relationships
18. Ability to solve problems	
19. Ability to make difficult decisions	
20. The ability to balance being in school with a full-time job	
21. Ability to keep class together under stressed conditions	
22. I admired his ability to laugh when things were going wrong	
23. Easy to get along with	
24. I admired how the editor in chief could be stressed out, but never really show it to her staff. She would always seem so calm and cool, despite the fact that the newspaper had a hole on page one or had three errors in the last issue	
<b>Demonstrated Ability to Build a Team</b>	<b>Demonstrated Ability to Build a Team</b>
1. Devotion to staff and its success	1. I tried to make the office an enjoyable place to work by having staff building chances outside of work
2. Ability to inspire teamwork	2. We also went bowling and had sleepovers where we were allowed to just sit back, laugh and have fun
3. Tight knit group philosophy	3. Worked to earn the staff's respect and friendship
4. Cared not just about the paper but also about the staff	4. Followed his (previous editor) lead in creating a real structure for our staff
5. Ability to earn friendship and respect from staff	5. Gave staffers the opportunity to get to know someone as a person and friend
6. Loyalty to staff	6. It also helped me delegate responsibilities and made us work together as a team because we needed every single person
7. Availability	
8. Created an enjoyable work atmosphere	

**Table 41. Continued**

9. The fact the editor was always available at one point or another to get a hold of when problems came up and the way he/she kept the staff together as kind of like a family of friends 10. The ability to allow independent function, but also bring the staff together as a team	
<b>Vision</b>	
1. Ability to communicate a vision for the paper 2. Vision for the paper 3. Set goals that the staff bought into 4. They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college careers 5. I still keep his vision as the basis for many decisions we make	1. We set goals for the paper as a whole and for each individual section 2. Tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them 3. Emulate papers you regard highly, not ones on your level 4. Operate on the same level as a professional newspaper
<b>Inspiring</b>	
1. Passion 2. Ability to inspire 3. Ability to motivate people 4. The ability to create a desire to excel 5. They had motivating personalities 6. I have always admired the ability of student leaders to inspire those around them 7. The ability to motivate the staff by communicating with them verbally 8. Ability to help other students understand the value of what they are doing 9. I admire leaders who can give people a purpose 10. Made others feel important and needed	1. Job was to make staff better able to do their jobs 2. Showed staff the role they have in the paper and the rewards the job will have for them 3. Took the job seriously, like it was a full-time job 4. Modeled the love for journalism 5. Demonstrated a passion for the cause (vision) 6. I developed my passion for a solid newspaper from my editor 7. Capture the spirit with words and images 8. Inspired staff to come forward with good ideas
<b>Dedication to Paper</b>	
1. They were there for the betterment of the publication 2. Although working for the paper would aid them in the long run, they ultimately wanted to see the paper and its staff members succeed 3. Inspiring to see someone so dedicated to bettering the student newspaper	1. I brought us through two redesigns of the paper to our present and modern look. I feel that between the efforts of my staff but mostly my managing editor, I have been able to bring the paper back to a student focus 2. Willing to pull long hours and had plenty of patience 3. Willing to put effort into the paper. Took the end product as a reflection of self 4. Stayed until last pages were finished and looked over, and were the last to leave the office

**Table 41. Continued**

5. The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation time making changes to make the next semester even better	
<b>Courageous</b>	<b>Courageous</b>
1. I loved the people who were willing to fight for a story or coverage or stand up to anything	
2. The ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism	
3. The ability to make strong, often controversial decisions in regard to the newspaper	
<b>Creative</b>	<b>Creative</b>
1. I've always been attracted to creativity and innovation when it is tempered with a respect for tradition and history	1. I would make competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section
<b>Determined</b>	<b>Determined</b>
1. Determination	1. Says a lot about those who can do it successfully while meeting other commitments

Ultimately the purpose of the study was to identify leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college newsroom leaders cite as most critical to their success in that top position. This was addressed in Research Question One. The results of each round are reported here for comparison to Kouzes and Posner's study for all leaders and Peters for professional journalists.

There were 119 replies from panelists identifying competencies, skills, and behaviors they regarded as critical to the role of top newsroom leader (Table 42). The list was reduced by eliminating similar or redundant responses, and 58 items were returned to panelists for consensus.

### **Identified Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors Compared to All Leaders (Kouzes and Posner) and Professional Newsroom Leaders (Peters)**

Responses to Question 6 in Round One (Tables 15 and 16) identified the most important competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college editors describe as necessary to be successful in that role. These responses are compared here to those

leadership competencies identified by Kouzes and Posner (1997) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders.

### **Comparison to Kouzes and Posner**

In the initial round, the expert panelists identified 58 leadership competencies and/or skills and behaviors critical to the success of the top leadership position. Table 42 contains panelists' responses that are equivalent or similar to Kouzes and Posner's list of 20 characteristics of admired leaders (Kouzes and Posner 1997, p. 21). Responses are given in the order of importance determined by Kouzes and Posner, not the expert panel. In many cases the panelists simply listed a competence or behavior, in others they gave explanations. In order to insure the most accurate representation of panelists' replies, the panelists' actual wording was used in compiling the list.

**Table 42. List of Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors Identified by Panelists Categorized according to Kouzes and Posner's List of 20 Admired Leadership Characteristics**

<b>Honest</b>
"Honesty"
"Sense of duty and honor"
"Honesty is number one"
<b>Forward-looking</b>
"A passion for continuous improvement and development of the newspaper and staff"
"Long-term vision is imperative! With that must come a plan. Upper management must be aware of what is going on in each section. They must be in tune with their staff, understanding their needs, strengths, weaknesses, limitations and abilities"
"Expect results - don't discount the papers ability to be a quality publication"
"Foresight"
"Have a plan, have a back-up plan"
"Ability to set goals"
"Goal setting"
"Taking an initiative"
<b>Inspiring</b>
"The most important quality about an editor in chief is that their heart be in the job"
"You need to gain your fellow worker's respect... That is the most important thing you can do. If they do not respect you then you have lost them forever. (I've never cared for bossy types and did not want to become one)"
"Sincere belief in what it takes to put together a quality newspaper"
"Faith in the potential of people. Trust in the management tier"

**Table 42. Continued**

<p>“This gets back to the distinction between management and leadership. Often, so-called management skills like “staffing” and “problem-solving” are really all about communication and inspiring others. Those are “Must-have” skills for an effective editor, but they are not always sufficient”</p> <p>“Positive role model (universal optimism)”</p> <p>“Role model”</p> <p>“Enthusiasm - it's infectious”</p> <p>“Promptness - never be late to a meeting, appointment”</p> <p>“Effort - if other people see you are trying, they will try”</p> <p>“Be positive in your leadership”</p> <p>“Motivation”</p> <p>“Willingness to go above and beyond to make something look or sound better “</p>
<b>Competent</b>
<p>“Ability to recognize and admit when you are wrong”</p> <p>“I think it is important for an incoming editor to be able to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses”</p> <p>“I found that if I was open to listening to suggestions by the staff, then they were much more open to hearing what I had to say”</p> <p>“Ability to listen”</p> <p>“Listening is key”</p> <p>“It is imperative to be a good listener”</p> <p>“An ear to hear ... you must listen to what your co-workers have to say. Their opinions are a big part of the newspaper”</p> <p>“Thick skin”</p> <p>“Showing people that you know what you're doing”</p> <p>“A preparedness for ethical situations”</p> <p>“Completion of a journalism ethics course”</p> <p>“Completion of a journalism law course”</p> <p>“Experience in more than one area of the newsroom (ex: news desk and copy desk)”</p> <p>“Involvement in the student community”</p> <p>“Willing to continue to learn (attend conferences and take journalism electives)”</p> <p>“Willingness to learn from mistakes”</p> <p>“Willingness to admit mistakes is essential”</p> <p>“Always be willing to learn --- editors don't know everything”</p> <p>“Leading by example”</p> <p>“Showing people that you know what you're doing”</p> <p>“Communication”</p> <p>“Communication is key”</p> <p>“I think some of the basics for any leadership position are helpful to an incoming editor: do what you can to help and educate your staff”</p> <p>“Good attention to both detail and the big picture, which is essential to getting a quality newspaper together”</p> <p>“Confidence in one's abilities and decisions”</p> <p>“Respect for others”</p> <p>“Trust is a big one”</p> <p>“Competency of various jobs and duties”</p> <p>“Accessibility”</p>

**Table 42. Continued**

<p>“Voice concerns”</p> <p>“Make educated decisions”</p> <p>“An editor needs to be able to multi-task”</p> <p>“An editor should be secure enough to give and receive critiques”</p> <p>“Ability to make tough decisions”</p> <p>“Ability to build respect of the staff”</p> <p>“Being able to be tough on your staff while still motivating them and keeping them on the team”</p> <p>“Willingness to work hard until the job is done”</p> <p>“Firm”</p> <p>“Versatility”</p> <p>“Accountability”</p> <p>“Execution”</p>
<b>Fair-minded</b>
<p>“Separating people from problems”</p> <p>“Allowing for individual differences and disagreements in opinion”</p> <p>“Fair”</p> <p>“Treat everyone fairly”</p> <p>“Keeping friendships out of office”</p> <p>“Be fair”</p> <p>“I think also that fairness and accuracy not only in journalistic writing but in dealing with others is important”</p> <p>“You must be consistent in what you tell people and make sure you tell everyone the same thing (This refers to style, deadlines, behavior in general)”</p>
<b>Supportive</b>
<p>“Patience” (several times)</p> <p>“Be very patient, sometimes you have to repeat yourself over and over to get your point across”</p> <p>“Understanding”</p> <p>“Be patient, calm and during deadlines while pushing to make sure everyone is keeping up to speed”</p> <p>“Be understanding of the needs of others”</p> <p>“An editor needs to be patient”</p> <p>“One thing a college editor should understand is that the staff also has classes and a life outside the paper”</p> <p>“Compassion, understanding and compromise are also very important”</p>
<b>Broad-minded</b>
<p>“Keeping an open mind. There are hundreds, thousands of different kinds of people on a college campus. It is important to make sure you don't judge things and vilify people with different ideas”</p> <p>“An open mind and an ability to bring a team together, to work together, and to function as a whole”</p> <p>“As editor I took on the role of mother. I made sure my staff ate, studied and made it to class on time. I was also a friend. I earned my staff's respect and they earned mine”</p> <p>“Open minded (minus their own personal agenda)”</p> <p>“Open mind”</p> <p>“An ideal editor should be open and listen to the readers and staff, Ideas come from everyone, not just editors”</p> <p>“A good sense of humor will help any editor survive”</p>



**Table 42. Continued**

<b>Intelligent</b>
“Intelligence (in necessary areas)”
“Intelligence”
“Ability to think quickly”
<b>Straightforward</b>
“Directness”
<b>Dependable</b>
“An editor should be dependable and be able to give as much as they expect to receive”
“Dependable”
<b>Courageous</b>
“Confidence in one’s abilities and decisions; willingness to defend the newspaper, its policies, and the employees of the newspaper”
“I think the most important leadership skill is the ability to handle major concerns skillfully, especially when presented with harsh criticism”
“Editors should also exhibit the courage and strength to stick to his/her decisions”
“During my reign as editor in chief, my staff fought a first amendment battle....It was very clear that we had a purpose at the college, we were important, the local newspapers didn't get half as much coverage. During these times, my best aspect was keeping us focused as to what was important and keeping us on deadline. The editor is the sanity of the staff. People look to the editor for guidance”
<b>Cooperative</b>
“He/she should be able to get along with people”
“Flexible”
<b>Imaginative</b>
“Creativity”
<b>Caring</b>
“A large heart”
<b>Determined</b>
“Determination”
<b>Mature</b>
“Having a level head, excellent anger management”
“Maturity”
<b>Ambitious (self-serving style)</b>
No equivalent
<b>Loyal</b>
“Dedication”
“I think it is also important for an editor in chief to really have a strong sense of dedication to the paper. For me, it was not a position that I could hold while also participating in many other activities”
“I think that the dedication encouraged the staff to also give what they could to the production of the paper”
“An editor should be prepared to stand behind his or her staff 100 percent”

**Table 42. Continued**

<b>Self Controlled</b>
“Professionalism - never lose your temper or talk down to anyone”
“Think before you speak ... keep emotions in tack (something that is more than difficult to do when you have school, social and family issues to deal with as well)”
“Having a level head, excellent anger management”
<b>Independent</b>
No equivalent

In their initial responses to this open-ended question, panelists identified leadership characteristics that were identical or equivalent to 90 percent of those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1997) as critical for all leaders. Their research, based on more than 20,000 business and government executives on four continents, consistently shows the four most important values or characteristics for all leaders as honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent.

The panel also named these four values or characteristics as important to the success of college newsroom leaders. The only values or characteristics for which panelists offered no obvious equivalent were “independent” or “ambitious.”

When these competencies and behaviors were returned to panelists for consensus in Round Two, the list included 18 of the 20 characteristics (or their equivalent) identified by Kouzes and Posner. The list included 58 items shown in Tables 43 and 44.

**Table 43. Leadership Competencies (Skills) Considered Most Important for Effective Execution of the Top College Newspaper Position Rated by Panel Members**

<b>Competencies (skills)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ability to communicate	3.96	0.20	1
Ability to make tough decisions	3.83	0.38	2
Ability and willingness to educate your staff	3.83	0.38	3
Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	3.79	0.41	4
Ability to set goals	3.75	0.44	5
Ability to listen to staff	3.71	0.46	6
Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	3.71	0.46	7
Leads by example	3.71	0.46	8

**Table 43. Continued**

<b>Competencies (skills)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ability to delegate	3.67	0.48	9
Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	3.67	0.56	10
Preparedness	3.63	0.49	11
Expects results from staff	3.63	0.49	12
Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	3.63	0.49	13
Ability to motivate	3.58	0.58	14
Ability to build a team	3.58	0.50	15
Secure enough to give and receive critiques	3.54	0.51	16
Separating people from problems	3.54	0.51	17
<b>Competencies (skills)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ability to reward and reprimand	3.52	0.59	18
A preparedness for ethical situations	3.52	0.51	19
Accessibility	3.50	0.59	20
Organized	3.46	0.66	21
Demonstrates journalism competencies	3.42	0.58	22
In touch with the student community	3.29	0.62	23
Experience holding other newsroom positions	3.25	0.61	24
Understand the staff also has classes and a life outside of the paper	3.21	0.78	25
Knowledge of media law	3.08	0.65	26
Participates in workshops, conferences, and courses to develop skills	2.79	0.72	27

**Table 44. Leadership Behaviors Considered Most Important for Effective Execution of the Top College Newspaper Position Rated by Panel Members**

<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Dependable	3.96	0.20	1
Dedication to the paper and staff	3.92	0.28	2
Honesty	3.88	0.34	3
A passion to improve and develop newspaper	3.79	0.41	4
Motivated	3.71	0.46	5
Fair	3.71	0.46	6
Decisive	3.71	0.46	7
Consistent	3.58	0.50	8
Mature	3.54	0.66	9
Open minded	3.54	0.51	10
Straightforward	3.50	0.66	11
Determined	3.50	0.59	12

**Table 44. Continued**

<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Supportive	3.46	0.59	13
Intelligent	3.46	0.66	14
Prompt	3.46	0.59	15
Self-confident	3.38	0.58	16
Trusting	3.38	0.58	17
Long-term vision	3.38	0.49	18
Inspiring	3.25	0.61	19
Firm	3.21	0.88	20
Exhibits positive attitude	3.21	0.83	21
Patient	3.21	0.66	22
Creative	3.21	0.51	23
Flexible	3.13	0.61	24
Unflappable, excellent anger management	3.13	0.68	25
Courageous	3.13	0.68	26
Enthusiastic	3.08	0.93	27
Tolerant	3.08	0.83	28
Compassion	3.04	0.75	29
Sense of humor	2.96	0.95	30
Nurturing	2.63	0.88	31

While 18 of the 20 leadership competencies and behaviors previously identified by panelists were equivalent to or similar to those in Kouzes and Posner's study, only 12 were rated high enough in Round Two to be sent back for ranking in Round Three. In Round Three, panelists were asked to select three leadership competencies (skills) and three leadership behaviors considered most important. The results are presented in Tables 45 and 46.

**Table 45. Leadership Competencies (Skills) Considered Most Important for Effective Execution of the Top College Newspaper Position Ranked by Panel Members**

The expert panel identified the following 15 leadership "competencies" and 10 leadership "behaviors" as important for an incoming editor in chief.		
<b>Competencies (skills)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ability to communicate	11	1
Ability to make tough decisions	10	2
Ability to motivate	8	3
Ability and willingness to educate your staff	6	4

**Table 45. Continued**

Competencies (skills)	Score	Rank
Ability to build a team	4	5
Ability to delegate	4	6
Leads by example	4	7
Ability to listen to staff	4	8
Preparedness	3	9
Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	3	10
Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	3	11
Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	2	12
Expects results from staff	2	13
Ability to set goals	2	14
Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	2	15

**Table 46. Leadership Behaviors Considered Most Important for Effective Execution of the Top College Newspaper Position Ranked by Panel Members**

Behaviors	Score	Rank
A passion to improve and develop the newspaper	16	1
Dedication to the paper and staff	14	2
Dependable	8	3
Honesty	7	4
Open minded	5	5
Fair	5	6
Motivated	5	7
Consistent	4	8
Decisive	4	9
Mature	1	10

The panelists indicated that when forced to choose three from a list of 15 leadership competencies and/or skills (Table 45) necessary for a top newsroom leader's success, the “ability to communicate” (11) and the “ability to make tough decisions” (10) led the list. The panels’ ranking of these items may indicate their understanding of the role these items play in their success with the next highest ranked roles, “ability to motivate” (8) and “ability and willingness to educate your staff” (6) both of which experts explain require effective communication skills. The next four items “ability to build a team,” “ability to delegate,” “leads by example,” and “ability to listen to staff” all

received a ranking of four. This is consistent with panelists' original responses concerning leadership competencies where they were emphatic about team-building, delegating, setting an example, and listening as being critical to the top leadership position. The relative ranking of these four items may be more of a reflection of the panelists being asked to choose the most important competency and/or skill. The panelists' replies may be an indication that they regard the two top ranked items as essential to success in all other competencies and/ or skills.

When asked to choose three leadership behaviors from a list of 10 (Table 46) they considered most important to the role of top newsroom leader, 70 percent selected "a passion to improve and develop the newspaper" (16) and 61 percent selected "dedication to the paper and staff" (14) as the top two leadership behaviors. The high score these top two leadership behaviors received reflect the importance these panelists' place on the level of commitment and loyalty they believe are necessary for success in this role. The next highest rankings were "dependable" with a score of (8) or 35 percent followed by "honesty" with a score of (7) or 30 percent. Although "honesty" ranked among the top four, its percentage score of 30 is not consistent with the results of Kouzes and Posner's study of all leaders which ranks honesty, at 88 percent, as the top characteristic of all admired leaders. It may not be that college newsroom leaders do not place a high value on honesty, only that the college newsroom culture, with its unique demands on student leaders, places a higher emphasis on commitment to the newspaper and loyalty to the staff to succeed.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) developed a list of the 20 most admired characteristics for all leaders by surveying several thousand business and government executives. The final ranking of these characteristics was based on administering the questionnaire to 20,000 leaders on four continents. The panelists in this study reached consensus on the competencies and behaviors they most admire in top college newsroom leaders by selecting, from a list of 15 competencies and 10 behaviors, the three leadership competencies and three leadership behaviors they considered most critical to the role of editor in chief. This resulted in a rank-ordered list of competencies and behaviors that could be compared to Kouzes and Posner's list for all leaders.

A comparison of these two lists (as shown in Table 47) demonstrates panelists agree with 12 of the characteristics that appear on Kouzes and Posner's list for all leaders. While these characteristics are not ranked in the same order of importance in the panel's list as they are in Kouzes and Posner's list, they are none-the-less considered important to the top newsroom leadership role. This list includes the seven highest ranked characteristics in Kouzes and Posner's list for all leaders indicating there is agreement concerning top ranked characteristics. More importantly, there is agreement about the importance of the top four characteristics, (honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent) which were ranked as significantly more important by all leaders.

In their final rankings, panelists did not identify equivalent or similar characteristics for eight of the 20 on Kouzes and Posner's list. These eight include intelligent, straightforward, courageous, imaginative, ambitious, loyal, self-controlled, and independent. However, in the previous round, Round Two, the panel did identify 18 of the 20 characteristics identified by Kouzes and Posner. Therefore, there is agreement between top college newsroom leaders and all leaders. The fact that eight characteristics do not appear on the panelists' final list, does not mean they are not considered important to panelists, but may be the result of panelists being forced to select the three most important characteristics. Two characteristics, "ambitious" and "independent" were not on the panels' original list and therefore were not included in the consensus building process. It is important to note that there may be responses similar or equivalent to "ambitious" and/or "independent" imbedded in replies to other questions.

The panel named two behaviors and four competencies that do not have equivalent characteristics to the Kouzes and Posner list. These characteristics may be more specific to the college newsroom arena. The panel ranked "consistent" and "decisive" eighth and ninth in a list of 10 behaviors considered most critical to the role of editor in chief.

The panel ranked "ability to identify the newspaper's strengths and weaknesses" as 10 in a list of 15 competencies. This was followed by "ability to learn from and admit mistakes," "ability to gain your fellow worker's respect," and "expects results from staff."

**Table 47. Comparison of Panelists' Top Ranked Leadership Competencies and Behaviors to Kouzes and Posner (1995) List of Characteristics of Admired Leaders**

<b>Kouzes and Posner (1997) List of 20 Characteristics of Admired Leaders (In Order of Importance)</b>	<b>Expert Panel (2005) Corresponding Characteristics Ranked by Top College Newspaper Leaders from List of Top 15 Competencies and 10 Behaviors</b>
Honest	Honesty
Forward-looking	A passion to improve and develop the newspaper
Inspiring	Ability to set goals
Competent	Ability to motivate, leads by example, Ability to communicate, ability to make tough decisions, ability to delegate, preparedness, communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders
Fair-minded	Fair
Supportive	Ability and willingness to educate your staff
Broad-minded	Open minded
Intelligent	(no equivalent)
Straightforward	(no equivalent)
Dependable	Dependable
Courageous	(no equivalent)
Cooperative	Ability to build a team
Imaginative	(no equivalent)
Caring	Dedication to the paper and staff Ability to listen to staff
Determined	Motivated
Mature	Mature
Ambitious	(no equivalent)
Loyal	(no equivalent)
Self-controlled	(no equivalent)
Independent	(no equivalent)

In her study of professional newsroom leadership, Peters (2001) surveyed 1,151 journalists in 21 newsrooms across the United States. Her results include the rankings top editors assign to 15 leadership traits. The panelists in this study reached consensus on the competencies and behaviors they consider most critical to top college newsroom leaders by selecting, from a list of 15 competencies and 10 behaviors, the three leadership competencies and three leadership behaviors they considered most critical to the role of editor in chief. This resulted in a rank-ordered list of competencies and



behaviors that could be compared to Peters' list of ideal traits of top professional newspaper editors.

Table 48 demonstrates panelists agree with eight of the characteristics that appear on Peters' list of ideal traits of top newsroom leaders. While these characteristics are not ranked in the same order of importance in the panel's list as they are in Peters' list, they are none-the-less considered important to the top college newsroom leadership role. This

**Table 48. Comparison of Panelists' Top Ranked Leadership Competencies, Skills, and Behaviors to Peters (2001) List of Characteristics of Top Professional Newspaper Leaders**

<b>Peters (2001) Ideal traits of top professional editors (editor, executive editor, managing editor)</b>		<b>Expert Panel (2005) Most important leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors of top college editors</b>
Leadership trait	Top editors	Leadership competencies, skills, or behaviors
Hiring/promoting wisely	71%	(no equivalent)
Communicating mission/goals	50%	Ability to communicate Ability to set goals
Setting high standards	36%	Expects results from staff
Preparing for future challenges	29%	A passion to improve and develop the paper Preparedness
Sound Judgment	21%	Ability to make tough decisions
Assumes role of teacher/coach	14%	Ability and willingness to educate staff
People-oriented approach to policies	14%	(no equivalent)
Ensuring fair, competitive salaries	14%	(no equivalent)
Accessible to all employees	14%	Ability to listen
Decisiveness	14%	Decisive
Collaborative work style	7%	Ability to build a team
Balancing profit demands/news values	7%	(no equivalent)
Delivers fair discipline	0%	(no equivalent)
Emphasizes constant staff learning	0%	(no equivalent)
Communicates news values outward	0%	(no equivalent)

\* () Rank order

list includes five of the six highest ranked characteristics in Peters' list of ideal traits of top newsroom leaders indicating there is agreement concerning top ranked characteristics.

In their final rankings, panelists did not identify equivalent or similar characteristics for six of the 15 on Peters' list. These six include hiring and promoting wisely, people-oriented approach to policies, ensuring fair/competitive salaries, balancing profit and demands/news values, delivers fair discipline, and communicates news values outward. Some of these traits such as hiring and promoting wisely, balancing profit demands and news values, and ensuring fair/competitive salaries have far less relevance in the college newsroom.

Two of the remaining traits in Peter's list, "delivers fair discipline," and "communicates news values outward," were not chosen by top professional newsroom editors or top college newsroom editors. However, no top newsroom leaders in Peter's study identified "emphasizes constant staff learning," as one of their top three choices, whereas six top college newsroom leaders, from the panel of 23, selected an equivalent in "ability and willingness to educate your staff."

It is important to note that in Peters' study professional journalists were given a list of traits or characteristics and asked to choose from that list. The traits or characteristics included in the expert panel's list were generated by the panel during Round One. As a result, the college journalists identified many competencies and behaviors that do not appear on Peters' list. That may not mean that professional journalists do not consider them important but Peters did not include them in her list of traits. They may be more critical to college journalists. The "ability to motivate" for example, is ranked third in a list of 15 leadership competencies identified by panelists. There is no comparable item in Peters' list. The same is true for "ability to delegate," "leads by example," "ability to listen to staff," "ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses," the "ability to learn from and admit mistakes," and "ability to gain your fellow worker's respect."

The most glaring differences become evident when comparing the panels' list of leadership behaviors with Peter's list of leadership traits. The panel ranked "dedication to

the paper and staff “second in a list of 10 leadership behaviors. There is no comparable item in Peters’ list. The same is true for “dependable,” “honesty,” “open-minded,” “fair,” “motivated,” and “mature.” These items are also included in Kouzes and Posner’s list of admired leadership characteristics for all leaders. That may not mean that professional journalists do not consider them important but Peters did not include them in her list of traits.

### **Shortfalls of Top College and Professional Newsroom Leaders**

Peters (2001) asked 1,151 journalists to address the most significant shortfalls (failings) of top editors as part of a study to establish a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses of professional newsroom leadership. Her participants were given a list of 13 shortfalls with an opportunity to add others. They were asked to choose three they regarded as most significant. This Delphi panel was also asked to identify leadership shortfalls, but was not provided with a list of shortfalls in Round One and was not limited in the number of responses they gave. In Round Three, the shortfalls identified for college newsroom leaders by the expert panel are compared to the shortfalls identified by Peters for professional journalist.

**Question 12:** *What do you regard as the most significant “shortfall” in leadership among most college newspaper editors? (See Table 6, Question 12)*

The expert panel generated a list of 21 shortfalls of top newsroom leaders (Table 49). There was widespread reporting of most or all of the shortfalls.

**Table 49. Most Significant Shortfalls of College Newspaper Leaders as Identified by Panelists**

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Members of the expert panel identified the following as the most significant “shortfalls” in leadership among most college newsroom editors.

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1. Editors with “agendas” tend to isolate the staff, preventing accurate reporting.
2. Becoming discouraged when they realize they can’t “change the world.”
3. Insufficient journalism background
4. They don’t know how to lead
5. Resume-builders who regard college newspaper only as a stepping stone to a job in “the real world.”
6. They don’t appreciate the priceless opportunity college newspapers offer for creativity and innovation.
7. Fails to view newsroom and role as an excellent teaching forum.
8. Attempts to make everyone happy.
9. Attacks everyone who is different
10. Inability to communicate and consult with staff

**Table 49. Continued**


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11. Lacks humility
12. Lacks confidence
13. Fails to take responsibility
14. Lack of vision
15. Failure to organize and report long-term, meaningful projects that would impact the community.
16. Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement.
17. They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others
18. Not willing to delegate tasks to others
19. Majority are either political sycophants or byline junkies
20. They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper'.
21. Failure to maintain relationships with the staff

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Responses generated by the expert panel were returned for rating in Round Two. In order to insure the most accurate representation of the panelists' replies, their actual wording was used in lists returned for consensus in Rounds Two and Three.

In Round Two, Question 7 (Appendix G) the expert panel was asked to rate the negative impact each of the 21 shortfalls had on the leadership success of college editors in chief. On a Likert scale ranging from "not significant" to "most significant" the panel ranked "Inability to communicate with staff," "Fails to take responsibility," and "They don't know how to lead" among the shortfalls that have the most negative impact on college newsroom leadership (Table 50).

**Table 50. Shortfalls Having a Negative Impact on Leadership Success of College Newspaper Leaders as Rated by Panelists**


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7. The expert panel identified the following "shortfalls" as having a negative impact on the leadership success of college editors in chief. In your experience, what impact do these "shortfalls" have on the role of editor in chief? (see question 7, Appendix G)			
Shortfalls	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Inability to communicate and consult with staff	3.75	0.44	1
Fails to take responsibility	3.71	0.75	2
They don't know how to lead	3.54	0.66	3
Lacks confidence	3.42	0.58	4
They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	3.39	0.78	5
Lack of vision	3.35	0.57	6
They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper'	3.29	0.86	7
Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	3.25	0.61	8
Not willing to delegate tasks to others	3.22	0.60	9
Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	3.21	0.72	10

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**Table 50. Continued**

<b>Shortfalls</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Lacks humility	3.21	0.88	11
Attacks everyone who is different	3.17	1.01	12
Resume-builders who regard college newspaper only as a stepping stone to a job in 'the real world'	3.17	0.82	13
Fails to view newsroom and role as an excellent teaching forum	3.08	0.65	14
Failure to organize and report long-term, meaningful projects that would impact the community	3.04	0.75	15
Attempts to make everyone happy	3.04	0.81	16
Editors with 'agendas' tend to isolate the staff, preventing accurate reporting	3.04	0.91	17
Majority are either political sycophants or byline junkies	2.88	1.08	18
They don't appreciate the priceless opportunity college newspapers offer for creativity and innovation	2.88	0.74	19
Insufficient journalism background	2.88	0.99	20
Becoming discouraged when they realize they can't 'change the world'	2.63	0.92	21

From the panelist-generated list of 21 shortfalls, 11 were sent back to the panel in Round Three. Since the goal of the study was to reach consensus, only the highest rated items were returned to panelists. The mean score of the 11 returned items ranged from a high of 3.75 to a low of 3.21.

In Round Three, Question 7 (Appendix H) the expert panel was asked to choose the three shortfalls they considered to have the most significant impact on the success of college newsroom leaders from the 11 leadership shortfalls identified in Round Two. The results are presented in Table 51. Nineteen of the 23 panelists in Round Three chose "Inability to communicate and consult with staff" as one of their three choices, causing it to be the top ranked shortfall of college newsroom leaders. The second ranked shortfall, "Failure to take responsibility" was consistent with its ranking in Round Two as the second highest ranked shortfall. However, only one person chose "They don't know how to lead," causing it to drop from third in Round Two, to the lowest ranked shortfall in this round.

**Table 51. Shortfalls Having a Negative Impact on Leadership Success of College Newspaper Leaders Ranked by Panelists**

7. The expert panel identified the following 11 leadership “shortfalls” as having a significant impact on the success of college editors in chief. (See Question 7, Appendix G)

Shortfalls	Score	Rank
Inability to communicate and consult with staff	19	1
Fails to take responsibility	10	2
They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	8	3
Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	7	4
Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	7	5
They don’t give 100 percent because they think, 'It’s only a college paper'	6	6
Not willing to delegate tasks to others	4	7
Lack of vision	4	8
Lacks humility	2	9
Lacks confidence	1	10
They don't know how to lead	1	11

Peters (2001) study of professional journalists at small, midsize, and metropolitan newspapers (Table 52) also found the greatest shortfalls of top editors fell within the “general category of too little contact and communication with staff” (p. 41). There is agreement in the category of “shortfalls” among professional and college journalists that a lack of communication between the top editor and the staff is seen as a significant failing.

**Table 52. Significant Shortfalls of Professional Newspaper Leaders as Identified by Peters (2001)**

Most significant shortfalls (by percentage) in leadership among newspaper’s top editors identified by professional journalists

Significant failings of top editors	Metro	Midsize	Small
1. Out of touch with staff concerns	43	40	26
2. Too little communication with staff	41	27	38
3. Insufficient feedback	29	20	30
4. Poor hiring and promoting	19	30	22
5. Unrealistic expectations	*	27	40

**Table 52. Continued**

<b>Significant failings of top editors</b>	<b>Metro</b>	<b>Midsized</b>	<b>Small</b>
6. Authoritarian decision making (midsized only)	*	37	*
7. No vision, or a narrow vision (midsized only)	*	20	*
8. Insufficient guidance of managers (metro only)	23	*	*

Source: Adapted from Sharon Peters, *The Leadership Question: An Overview of Key Findings*, ASNE, A Call to Leadership, 2001, p. 34-53.

\* Percentages not reported by Peters

Participants in Peters' study were "asked to choose three shortfalls from a list of 13. Employees at small, midsized, and metro papers named 'Out of touch with staff concerns,' 'Too little communication with the staff,' and 'Insufficient feedback' among the five greatest failings of top editors" (p. 41). A comparison of shortfalls of college and professional newsroom leaders is provided in Table 53. Bass (1990) states that "considerable evidence has accumulated to demonstrate the connections between competence in communicating and satisfactory performance as a leader and manager (p.111).

**Table 53. Comparison of Significant Shortfalls of College and Professional Newspaper Leaders**

The expert panel identified the following 11 leadership "shortfalls" as having a significant impact on the success of college editors in chief (see question 7, Appendix H).		Top professional newsroom leaders identified six significant leadership shortfalls among newspaper's top editors (in descending order of frequency cited).	
<b>Shortfalls</b>	<b>Shortfalls</b>	<b>Rank</b>	
Inability to communicate and consult with staff	Insufficient guidance of managers	1	
Fails to take responsibility	Too little communication with staff	2	
They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	Insufficient feedback	3	
Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	Inadequate contact with the community	4	
Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	Unrealistic expectations	5	
They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper'	Out of touch with staff concerns	6	
Not willing to delegate tasks to others		7	
Lack of vision		8	
Lacks humility		9	
Lacks confidence		10	
They don't know how to lead		11	

Source: Adapted from Sharon Peters, *The Leadership Question: An Overview of Key Findings*, ASNE, A Call to Leadership, 2001, p. 34-53.

While communication is ranked number one among the top six shortfalls of college journalists, a lack of commitment to the newspaper and its staff is also reflected in the top six shortfalls. These shortfalls are similar to misconceptions previously reported by the panel concerning the leadership commitment of top newsroom leaders. For example, “Failure to take responsibility” is ranked second in the list of shortfalls. The panel indicated in its list of misconceptions (Table 11) that they were surprised by the “high level of responsibility required” of the top newsroom leader, despite reporting a high level of leadership experience prior to taking the role of editor in chief. A comparison of leadership shortfalls and misconceptions is provided in Table 54.

Panelists’ selection of “settle for mediocrity,” “failure to maintain relationships,” and “failure to develop strategic plans” are among the top ranked shortfalls of college newsroom leaders. This may help explain why the attitude that the newspaper is “Only a college paper” is also ranked among the top six. Panelists indicated in their responses to Question Five in Round One that they admired and tried to emulate leaders who thought of themselves as professional journalists and set goals for their newspapers using professional standards. As one editor stated in her response to Question Five: “Don’t call your paper a student newspaper. It is a professional newspaper run by students.”

**Table 54. Comparison of Leadership Shortfalls and Misconceptions as Identified by Panelists**

<b>Most significant shortfalls of college newspaper editors</b>	<b>Prior misconceptions concerning leadership commitment</b>
1. Inability to communicate and consult with staff	1. The long hours and amount of patience required are not as easy as it looks or sounds
2. Fails to take responsibility	2. Thought the role would be easier
3. They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	3. That it was a part-time job
4. Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	4. It's hard work
5. Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	5. The job is way more involved and taxing than the stipend or recognition covers
6. They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper.'	6. I knew it wasn't an easy task, but I didn't know it would be so stressful
7.	7. High level of responsibility required



### Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: What recommendations do these editors have for the future leadership development and training of editors? This question was addressed by five questions in Round Three, questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. These questions were not included in the consensus building rounds because the goal of Research Question Three was to establish the level of prior leadership training individual panelists had and the nature of that training. This research question also sought to establish who or what provided the greatest impact on their leadership experience during their tenures as newsroom leaders as well as their opinions and recommendations concerning effective ways to train future newsroom leaders.

### Identified Leadership Training

Since many researchers maintain that leadership can be taught (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997, Conger 1992) the final five questions requested information concerning panelists' leadership training and their recommendations for effective ways to teach college newsroom leadership. In an ideal world, as one panelist stated, "A key to having a successful college program is to create a leadership structure that will pull in students their freshman year and then prepare them for editor positions." However, in the world of college newsrooms there is little time for leadership training. Many editors in chief learn their skills through on-the-job training in other leadership positions. Some college journalists, including members of this panel, were recruited directly from the rank of reporter. They began their positions without leadership training or even the benefit of holding previous newsroom leadership positions.

**Question 8:** *Did you receive formal leadership training (course, seminar, workshop) before you became editor in chief? If so, how many hours of leadership training did you receive? (Table 8, Question 8)*

In their responses to this question, 10 panelists indicated they had received leadership training before becoming editor in chief or managing editor (Table 55). However, 13 panelists, more than half, indicated they had not received training as part of the preparation for the top newsroom leadership role.

**Table 55. Leadership Training Reported by Panelists**

Less than 8 hours	4
8 hours	0
2-3 day seminar	2
<i>Comments:</i> “The advisor at my publication was a constant source for what I had ahead of me. I spent hours in his office asking questions and beginning to implement plans before I even began my tenure as the editor.”	
5 day seminar	1
Other	3
<i>Comments:</i> “Combination of seminars at conferences and in the office.” “I attended various newspaper workshops, was trained at an internship and we had a two-week all-staff training before we started the year.” “The (name withheld) holds a boot camp every semester for incoming staff members. Workshops are facilitated by professionals and former members of (name withheld). Each workshop runs for about 90 minutes and covers topics on reporting, writing, editing and managing your section.”	

Of the 43 percent who reported they attended leadership training, some of the comments indicate the training the panelists received may not be specific to leadership. For example, in the comment describing a “boot camp” held each semester, leadership may not have been included at all, unless it was included in the segment “managing your section.” In the context of this statement, management and leadership are considered synonymous. This assumption is supported by replies to a question in Round One, where only 54 percent of the panel indicated they were aware of the differences in management and leadership.

Despite this confusion concerning the differences in leadership and management, 92 percent of the panelists in Round One stated that the distinction between management and leadership was important. College newsroom leaders place a high value on many of the skills experts say are specific to effective leadership and describe them as critical to their success.

### **Follow-up Training**

Conger (1992) states that “a single, one-time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change” (p.192). For students participating in seminars, that

follow-up training would have to be done by program managers or advisers or through their participation in additional seminars and workshops. Question 9 was designed to determine if panelists received follow-up leadership training. This makes agreement among educators about key leadership skills and the best way to teach and reinforce them even more critical to editors' leadership development. For this reason, panelists were asked to describe the training they received (Table 56).

**Question 9:** *Did you receive leadership training during your tenure as top newsroom leader? If yes, please describe that training in the space below:*  
(See Table 8, Question 9)

Although 43 percent of respondents indicated they had leadership training prior to becoming editor in chief, only nine panelists, or 39 percent, reported receiving leadership training during their tenure. Of those who indicated they did receive additional training, 5 offered leadership seminars held during national media conventions as additional training. These seminars, offered under the “leadership” rubric, are usually an hour in duration and may include a variety of issues ranging from motivating the staff to time management (CMA 2004).

One student attended the annual week-long management seminar for college newspaper editors sponsored by the University of Georgia and Cox Institute for Newspaper Management Studies. This seminar is held in August and is limited to 50 students. The content is driven by a survey applicants complete prior to the seminar asking for areas of interest that includes 23 topics that range from “motivating staff” to “budgeting,” “when to refuse advertising,” and “the role of student fees in the revenue stream.”

Another panelist indicated they relied on the adviser and general manager for guidance on leadership matters throughout year on an “as needed” basis. Four panel members offered annual or semi-annual school sponsored training sessions including day-long retreats that focused on interpersonal skills and in-house lectures as the training they received during their tenure. One respondent indicated they used trips to the local newspaper as a way to develop leadership skills while serving as editor in chief.

While these seminars and retreats may have been informative and offered valuable ideas, panelists did not indicate whether or not the training they received was designed to reinforce or follow up leadership training they received at national conferences or were specifically designed to meet the leadership needs of their individual newsrooms. There is no evidence that there is a structure in place sufficient to reinforce prior leadership training. Experts emphasize that leadership development requires reflection, understanding, and practice along with frequent reinforcement (Bennis, 1994). Student newsroom leaders have only a limited time to learn the leadership skills necessary for that role. Students who need leadership guidance will often turn to advisers for help and advice on a daily basis. While this is helpful, their advisers' leadership knowledge may also be limited. Advisers are often "socialized" leaders who have gained their knowledge from trial and error experiences in their role as advisers. Their anecdotal advice is based on experience, which is important, and often accurate, but not informed by scholarly research.

**Table 56. Panelists' Descriptions of Leadership Training**

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I was sent to the Management Seminar for College Newspaper Editors in Georgia.
I received ongoing guidance from our advisor and general manager. While there was not a specific, sit-down seminar, each was always available to help and offer advice.
Several College Media Advisers conferences and state press association conferences that had leadership training courses.
Combination of seminars, and some in-office lectures with board members
College newspaper conference courses in leadership
Semester workshops where leadership skills were taught. We also had a management retreat done at the beginning of one semester where for a day we focused on interpersonal skills
I attended conferences as well as planned trips to the local community newspaper for a support system.
As a staff we visited national college media conferences and had the opportunity to attend seminars about these topics.
I attended the College Media Advisers' college newspaper convention, the Associated Students of (name withheld) leadership workshops and an all-staff training session again before my second year as editor in chief.

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National leadership seminars lack the adequate leadership content, concentration on significant leadership skills and competencies, and necessary follow-up opportunities to make them effective in meeting the leadership needs of college newsroom leaders.

### Individuals Who Impacted Panel's Ability to Lead

There is a long history of students having a close working relationship with their college newspaper advisers. It is generally assumed that the college newspaper adviser has a high level of contact and influence on the top newsroom leader. This question was asked to determine if this assumption is correct for members of this panel and to identify others who may also had an impact on their leadership.

**Question 10:** *During your time as a college newsroom leader, describe an individual with whom you interacted on a regular basis, who had the greatest impact on your ability to lead. (See Table 8, Question 10)*

Of the final 23 panelists in this Round, 22 responded to this question. One respondent provided two individuals who had an impact on their leadership. The panelists' comments are provided in Table 57.

**Table 57. Persons with Greatest Impact on Panelists' Leadership Experiences**

*The panels' comments are taken directly from their responses. To guarantee the panelists anonymity, reference to advisers' names and the panelists' school affiliations have been removed.*

The adviser of the newspaper helped on a regular basis and gave advice.

My Student Publications director had the greatest impact on me. Although his method of brutal honesty hurt at first, the effect was deep - I hold myself to higher standards thanks to him. Working with him has taught me what to do AND what not to do: I need criticism to improve, and he gave it to me. Others on my staff, though, did not do well when I used this method. I've learned to observe how best to deal with people by recognizing what works. My director found that with me.

Our advisor, (name withheld), offered excellent advice continually through my time as editor. He was accessible at all hours of the day and night, and had the foresight to allow us to make mistakes on our own at times, and then helped us learn from them. He taught me that you can't please everyone, but you have to make decisions that are good for your staff and the newspaper.

(name withheld), my adviser. He was always teaching. I read stories with him, talked over major decisions with him and learned from his advice. His years of professional experience were invaluable to me and my staff.

(Newspaper and name withheld), often helped me with a lot of the things I had to deal with in the newsroom, and also helped get me acclimated to the job once I took it. Although I never really had any formal training, he has been a great guy to help me make decisions, just so we can talk about things before I decide on something.

There was one person, (name withheld). He came in as a high-maintenance reporter that no one could stand. He was arrogant, loud, and often obnoxious. After one semester of working with me, he changed considerably. I even suggested him for entertainment editor. That seemed to make him try even harder, and take the job more seriously. I think he saw how high my standards were and realized that we were not that different. I was very surprised at that transformation. It made me think about how many of the staff noticed the long hours I put in, the never calling in sick and always making my deadlines. I think it had a trust effect. They could trust me to maintain a certain level, and they knew I expected that out of them.

**Table 57. Continued**


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(name withheld), editorial adviser
The last two times I was editor in chief, I interacted with my adviser on a daily basis. She gave me insight on dealing with my peers.
The editor in chief my sophomore year was particularly skilled at developing a vision, communicating it and getting other students to buy into that vision. He never settled for mediocre work and always showed a commitment to high ethical standards. Most of all, he knew when to fight for journalistic principles in the face of overwhelming opposition.
I interacted with past editors in chief, former advisers and the current adviser to get influence and advice about how I could better lead the paper.
My predecessor at the position had a tremendous impact, because he showed me precisely how I did NOT want my newsroom to operate. I learned a lot of things from negative example, including not to micromanage, the importance of humility and apologizing, and that awards and tricks do not make up for actual motivation. I imagine this happens a lot in college newspapers and elsewhere, and it wouldn't shock me if the next EIC is, in some way, a reaction to me.
Trusted staff members who I could go to for honest evaluation and criticism
It was with the newspaper's adviser simply because she was there most all the time as opposed to my being there five straight days. She was able to fill me in if I wasn't there as far as if there were any problems with writers getting stories done or where the current status was with certain sections.
My adviser was the most amazing person. He was a constant source of support and encouragement. He worked with us to improve our product, but more importantly our personal development. He allowed us to make mistakes without getting angry. Everything was a learning experience.
My adviser, (name withheld), was instrumental in aiding in the transition to leader or manager if you will. She has experience in public relations, so dealing with others was something she had experience in.
The newspapers' adviser was as dedicated to the newspaper as we were. She would come to the important meetings, get her hands dirty when we needed her too and would defend our paper and staff to the end. She was our slave driver and moral guide; everyone wanted to grow up to be like her.
In the early stages, I probably relied on our adviser to a large extent, especially since the staff and I were changing things about the paper and we wanted to make sure we were on the right track. He was great because he gave us guidance where needed, but did not make decisions for us, allowing me to take charge.
The previous editor was a good leader. He was always polite, had a good head on his shoulders, new his work and kept a professional atmosphere.
My advisor. Although he was very hands off around the paper, I often found myself looking for guidance from him.
The editor took me under her wing for training to become the managing editor. She has inspired me through her work and dedication to the newspaper despite her many of required duties and jobs.
Our adviser (name withheld), who I turned to for advice not just about the newspaper's content but also about members of the staff and how to handle difficult situations. Her honesty and dedication motivated me to be a better leader.
The former editorial adviser. I consult with her daily because of her willingness to help me.

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Sixteen panel members identified their publication advisers as the person who had the greatest influence on their leadership. This is evidence that advisers did play a major role in leadership development for 73 percent of this panel. In describing their interaction with advisers, the characteristic they mentioned most frequently was the

opportunity to interact on a regular (daily) basis. They also mention their advisers as playing an important role in helping them to transition into the top leadership role. They mention other qualities displayed by their advisers as positive influences on their ability to lead. These include holding “high standards,” being a “moral guide,” and having a high level of “dedication to the newspaper.”

Seven of the panelists indicated that peers, mostly former editors, had the most powerful influence on their leadership development and ability to lead. One editor said he relied on trusted staff for “honest evaluation and criticism.”

One panel member described her transition to managing editor stating: “The editor took me under her wing for training to become the managing editor. She has inspired me through her work and dedication to the newspaper despite her many required duties and jobs.”

The most powerful examples of peer influence on leadership development were given by panel members who offered completely different experiences—one positive and one negative.

One panel member reported they were influenced by a former editor in chief whose actions demonstrated the leadership traits experts state exemplify leadership. He stated: “The editor in chief my sophomore year was particularly skilled at developing a vision, communicating it and getting other students to buy into that vision. He never settled for mediocre work and always showed a commitment to high ethical standards. Most of all, he knew when to fight for journalistic principles in the face of overwhelming opposition.”

This is in sharp contrast to a panel member who stated her former editor in chief had an enormous negative impact on her concept of leadership. She stated:

My predecessor at the position had a tremendous impact, because he showed me precisely how I did not want my newsroom to operate. I learned a lot of things from negative example, including not to micromanage, the importance of humility and apologizing, and that awards and tricks do not make up for actual motivation. I imagine this

happens a lot in college newspapers and elsewhere, and it wouldn't shock me if the next EIC is, in some way, a reaction to me.

Panelists' replies indicate both advisers and college newsroom leaders have their own unique role in helping to develop future newsroom leaders. These panelists indicated they looked to the adviser as a valuable resource and for guidance and encouragement. However, when attempting to develop their own leadership style, they looked to their experiences with previous editors. While advisers offer continuous encouragement and guidance, former leaders, both good and bad, have an impact on the leadership style and development of those who succeed them.

Question 11 was asked in order to discover if panelists would consider seeking formal leadership training if they were in another leadership role. Of the 23 panelists in Round Three, 22 responded to the question. These responses are included in Table 58.

**Question 11:** *If you decided to take another leadership role, explain why you would or would not seek formal leadership training. (See Table 8, Question 11)*

**Table 58. Panelists' Responses Regarding Future Leadership Training**

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I would have gone through formal training.

I would, but not in terms of journalism leadership. I would take a management course of some sort and pick and choose what to bring to the newsroom. Thinking of things in terms of non-journalism management can often solve more problems than you think.

Although I did not undergo formal leadership training, I did have informal training through out my semester as editor. However, I certainly think formal training could also help prepare an incoming editor.

I think I would because it is always important to brush up on the essentials of being a leader. It's easy to slip into habits that might not be best for the newspaper or any other job. Taking leadership courses makes you think about your role and the best way to manage and lead a group.

I do not think leadership is something that really can be taught. I think that working for a year as the editor in chief is the best training I could have for some kind of leadership role. A seminar on things like "team-building" or communications skills wouldn't help me do these things better. These are things that improve with practice.

I would probably not. Training can give you an overview, but is not able to prepare you for unpredictable situations. As an editor, these will come up frequently.

Leadership is the ghost in the machine. Any leadership training helps in learning that.

I would like to seek leadership training because I don't know everything. Being a leader is more of a responsibility than most people realize. I want to do it right.

I don't plan to take another leadership role any time soon.



**Table 58. Continued**


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I believe the best training is on-the-job training and since I have already received that I do not see the need for “formal” training, although it might help.
I think some parts of leadership cannot be taught. I think things that are specific to the field and organization that you’re working in can be, and those I would seek some type of training in. I know college papers pretty well by now, but if I were to be a leader elsewhere, I’d probably have to learn about that field to be effective or even comfortable.
I would take the training, however most things you learn in terms of leadership are from your own personal experiences.
I have had enough experience watching how other editors have worked on the paper over the years that I feel I can do a better job or can copy what they did to make the paper worth working on.
I think I would like to not have the formal training. I do not think that any amount of training would help in this aspect. You have to learn it and learn from mistakes. Without this kind of hands on experience, things you were taught mean nothing.
It’s so important. I would always seek out resources to help me learn as much as possible about the role I was accepting. I feel like the more I can learn the better and there are always people out there who can enrich one’s personal experience.
I think I did ok without training and learned from my tenure. I’m still friends with my staff. I feel like I improved the paper and the staff.
A training workshop may have been helpful, but I think it is more helpful as a motivating process not so much as an educational process. You aren’t going to learn everything you need to know about being editor in chief by participating in a weekend-long program. These training exercises are most successful in focusing an individual on what can be done and what they can do to achieve their goals.
I would seek formal leadership training because I know I can always learn more about being a leader. There’s always more room to learn.
I would because I feel it is important to communicate well with people. I know I personally need constant reminders of how to deal with students, teachers, etc.
I think it would all depend. I think discussing leadership and specific leadership problems that pertain to your staff is better than a general training session.
I would seek formal training because it is important to learn from other leaders. But this would not be the only type of training I would receive. I believe that a lot of leadership skills are learned directly from experience: the trial and error that comes with being a leader.
I would seek formal training to learn new skills and to enhance skills I possess.

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Thirteen panelists indicated they would seek formal training (course, seminar or workshop) if they accepted another leadership position. Nine panelists indicated they would not seek additional leadership training. Of those who would seek training, their replies indicate they realize the complex nature of leadership and they recognize the need to maintain current skills and to learn new skills. As one panelist stated: “I would seek formal training...[but] I believe that a lot of leadership skills are learned directly from

experience: the trial and error that comes with being a leader.” Despite the value they place on developing leadership skills while on the job, they recognize that formal leadership training can help to provide them with a more comprehensive set of leadership skills.

Several panelists offered detailed explanations describing their reasons for seeking further leadership training. One panelist emphasized: “I think I would because it is always important to brush up on the essentials of being a leader. It’s easy to slip into habits that might not be best for the newspaper or any other job. Taking leadership courses makes you think about your role and the best way to manage and lead a group.” Another panelist stated: “I would like to seek leadership training because I don’t know everything. Being a leader is more of a responsibility than most people realize. I want to do it right.”

In their replies to previous questions concerning college newsroom leadership, panelists described certain aspects of their leadership roles as being unique to that arena. One panelist, in his reply to this question, expressed the need for leadership training in all organizations that is specific to those arenas.

He indicated that he does not consider his newspaper leadership training, both on-the-job and formal, as necessarily transferable to leadership positions in other arenas. He explained: “I think some parts of leadership cannot be taught. I think things that are specific to the field and organization that you’re working in can be, and those I would seek some type of training in. I know college papers pretty well by now, but if I were to be a leader elsewhere, I’d probably have to learn about that field to be effective or even comfortable.”

Most of the nine panelists who indicated they would not seek formal training emphasized the importance they placed on the “hands on” training they received on-the-job. They describe this experience as the way to gain the leadership expertise sufficient to be successful in that role. One panelist explained formal training as more “motivational than educational.” He stated: “You aren’t going to learn everything you need to know about being editor in chief by participating in a weekend-long program. These training exercises are most successful in focusing an individual on what can be

done and what they can do to achieve their goals.” Another panelist who emphasizes learning from experience stated: “I believe the best training is on-the-job training and since I have already received that I do not see the need for formal training, although it might help.”

These nine panelists do not see leadership courses, seminars, or workshops as relevant to their leadership development, and in at least one case, a panelist questions whether leadership skills can be taught through formal training. He stated: “I do not think leadership is something that really can be taught. I think that working for a year as the editor in chief is the best training I could have for some kind of leadership role. A seminar on things like “team-building” or communications skills wouldn't help me do these things better. These are things that improve with practice.”

Another panelist stated: “I do not think that any amount of training would help... You have to learn it and learn from mistakes. Without this kind of hands-on experience, things you were taught mean nothing.” Bennis (1994) states that “failure and mistakes are major sources of vital experience...there can be no growth without risks and no progress without mistakes” (p.185).

Approximately 41 percent of the panel indicated that they consider actual experience to be the greatest benefit in developing their leadership skills.

These panelists' views are, at least in part, consistent with leadership experts opinions that emphasize leadership development requires practice—that practice (on-the-job training) as one element of leadership development (Rost, 1991).

However, Born (1996) emphasizes that leadership programs need better scholarship and higher standards, rather than on-the-job training. He states:

Precisely in an age when high level critical thinking and academic skills are more important than ever for directing tasks, planning strategically, achieving, and, yes, even leading, the rhetoric of experimental “hands-on” education, so crucial in the leadership oeuvre, corrodes that understanding. (p. 48)

Panelists identified the most effective ways to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success, both prior to beginning the role (Table 59) and while on the job (Table 60).

**Question 12:** *Given the short tenure of most college journalists, what is the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success? Prior to beginning the role:*

*While on the job: (See Table 8, Question 12)*

Twenty-two of the 23 panelists responded to the first part of this question.

**Table 59. Most Effective Way to Educate New Editors prior to Beginning the Role**

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I think it would be beneficial for an editor to keep a journal and pass it down to the next editor. It would help the new editor put to position into prospective and allow he or she to make the need changes. It would also help the new editor to learn from another's experience

Have them serve as lower-level editors before coming to the editor in chief role. In addition, newspapers should provide at least some kind of mentor program in which the outgoing editors have three weeks to transfer authority/skills/advice to the new editor (at any level).

I think communicating with your staff what is expected as an editor is very important. Often, a leader has specific goals for the paper, but doesn't express them to the staff. It's very hard for employees to live up to an editor's expectations if they are never clearly expressed.

Have a newspaper leadership course every year. Invite the editor, the section editors and important players in the newsroom and go over leadership skills they need. Every paper is different, so things will have to be handled differently. Making sure the leaders know how to lead in their circumstances is very important.

I think that new editors in chief should have been editors on the staff so they are familiar with the way the newspaper works. The outgoing editor should spend at least a week getting the new editor settled into the job, explaining the challenges and what worked and didn't work during their own tenure.

They should be told what is expected of them before they even apply for the job. The most important thing any editor can do is be there on a daily basis. It would help if an editor had experience at the paper before he or she applied for the job. While that would be the ideal situation, it should not be mandatory. Some people are just made for the role.

Read about the experiences of top editors and how they overcame the challenges the faced.

Talk to past editors in chief and find out their visions. This way, you can also avoid making the same mistakes they did. You may also find ways to incorporate standards from professional newspapers into yours.

**Table 59. Continued**


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Outgoing editors should develop a plan for training their successors. They should begin to transition quickly, so that they will still be around while their successors are on the job. They should challenge the incoming editors with new assignments, such as editing a difficult story or reporting a difficult story. And they should communicate regularly to share experiences and insight on the transition, such as how to appoint other staff members.

Having a yearly leadership conference to teach incoming editors about what they are about to get themselves into would be greatly helpful.

I think, to a certain extent, some training is good in terms of methodology and how best to achieve the management style you want to run. Seminars worked well for me when they dealt with ways of handling situations, but not when they spent time talking about how people should feel and how I should want them to feel; I knew that already.

Training in all aspects of the job, being open to questions

A new editor should realize that it takes time unfortunately to make his/her newspaper a good one (provided he/she is willing to give their 110 percent to the job and take it seriously). They should realize making the newspaper to what they would like it to be is not going to happen immediately overnight as well as realize that there are going to be staff shortages and short-comings.

Have them attend conventions and give them what if situations. Involve them in the decision making process.

Send them to a seminar. I attended MSCNE in Athens, Georgia. Before I even started, I was give the opportunity to meet with people in my same position and forge friendships that would help me get through the job. I could e-mail or call for advice -- essentially, it offered me the ability to have a shared experience with 50 other people who understood what I was going through.

My staff all knew what my job as editor entailed. If they wanted to be part of something or learn how to do what I was doing, they were more than welcomed. I left my staff with no surprises.

I think it's important to have some sort of written manual (if possible) giving a crash course in the job, but it is more important to identify future editors as early as possible and work with them so that they can learn as they do.

Maybe set up a leadership class or weekend meeting in which the editor meets with other editors and discusses certain issues.

I spent one year as assistant editor to learn the ropes of the editorship. I think this was adequate experience for me to jump into the position as chief editor.

The leader should meet with the editor or if the person is the editor, he/she should meet with the adviser or past editor for advice, tips, and plans for improvement.

The best way to train new editors is to have a training workshop before they start their job, preferably during the last week of summer.

Incorporate a series of workshops that pinpoints the skills needed to get through the semester.

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**Table 60. Most Effective Way to Educate New Editors While On-the-Job**


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While on the job it would be beneficial to attend conferences.

Reading leadership/management literature (One-minute manager is good) and finding out strengths and weaknesses from the staff. The best way to learn is to find out what the perception is of your leadership.

I think the best training is experience. If mistakes are made, going over the situation constructively can help clarify where the situation went wrong.

Making sure things are followed up on. Go over goals and make sure they are being addresses. Take the situations as they happen and deal with them accordingly.

It helps to have a great adviser who really provides the only long-term continuity on the college newspaper. This person can really be a steadying influence without being overbearing.

An editor should really pay attention to his or her staff. Are deadlines being missed? Are there any other sloppy mistakes being made? Are too many of your staff only willing to write about what they want to write about? These problems will have to be dealt with. A good editor is watching the patterns and knows when to steer them back on the path. You will always have to remember that your staff is essential to your success as an editor and as a newspaper. Pick them well and treat them well.

Have an individual (with journalism experience) to talk about the leadership decisions you've had to make and leadership efforts you're trying to accomplish.

They should consult with their adviser or other mentor.

First, step back. An outgoing editor should let his/her successor learn on his/her own without having to look over their shoulder. But always offer suggestions (even if only privately) and be willing to offer advice. Critique some issues and stories to offer specific advice.

The newspaper adviser should be there to give the editor advice about his/her progress and how that person can improve their skill level.

Consistent check-up interviews with the staff and, possibly, advisers or board members, are important. Most of the time, your staff won't tell you if they're having a problem, but sometimes they do and it's important for them to know that you're interested in doing a good job for them.

Advice and guidance, while being hands off

Continue to allow them to go to conventions and suggest that they talk with other managers as well as the publication's adviser.

Attend a conference to create a fresh outlook - it re-energizes the staff and offers a fresh perspective. Again, it gives people the opportunity to share their experiences.

A leadership seminar would be a good idea. Something to teach organizational or communication skills could help.

They'll only learn on the job based on their experiences. There should be an editorial board or some sort of group that the senior editor reports to so that he or she is forced to evaluate their own competencies.

The most important thing for an editor is to personally know the field she is working in. I spent numerous hours alone in the classroom just becoming acquainted with the materials available and the computer programs.

Leaders should evaluate themselves and maybe even have the staff evaluate them. They should also continue to consult with the adviser and other editors for advice on new issues.

Have one-on-one training sessions with them, going over their edits and being there for them to ask questions about their job in the first few weeks of the year. Maintain a relationship with them in which they know to go to you if they have any questions throughout their tenure as editor.

On the job workshops to tighten up on leadership and managerial skills at least twice a month.

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In their replies concerning the most effective way to educate new editors before they assume the top newsroom leadership role, 50 percent of the panel indicated that critical information concerning this leadership position can best be transferred by the outgoing editor.

Panelists indicate the outgoing editor plays a key role in the transfer of critical information regarding the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to the editor in chief or managing editor's success.

Panelists suggest several ways this transfer of information can be accomplished. One panelist who supervised 60 people at a daily newspaper stated:

I think it would be beneficial for an editor to keep a journal and pass it down to the next editor. It would help the new editor to put the position into perspective and allow he or she to make the needed changes. It would also help the new editor to learn from another's experience.

Implementing a mentor program was another suggestion for transfer of information that came from an editor who supervised a staff of 50 at a daily. She stated: "Newspapers should provide at least some kind of mentor program in which the outgoing editors have three weeks to transfer authority, skills, and advice to the new editor (at any level)." Another panelist agreed, stating: "The outgoing editor should spend at least a week getting the new editor settled into the job, explaining the challenges and what worked and didn't work during their own tenure."

Another panelist suggested talking with "past editors in chief" in an effort to "avoid making the same mistakes they did."

A former editor of a daily, who supervised a staff of 125, agreed that the outgoing editor plays a key role in training his or her predecessor, stating:

Outgoing editors should develop a plan for training their successors. They should begin to transition quickly, so that they will still be around while their successors are on the job. They should challenge the incoming editors with new assignments, such as editing a difficult story or reporting a difficult story. And they should communicate regularly to share experiences and insight on the transition, such as how to appoint other staff members.

One panelist, who supervised a staff of 75 as editor of a newspaper published three times a week, recommended sending the incoming editor in chief to a seminar, however, it wasn't the content of the seminar that she emphasizes as being beneficial. She stressed the importance of establishing contacts with other incoming editors who could serve as peer advisers. She stated:

I attended [a week-long seminar]. Before I even started, I was give the opportunity to meet with people in my same position and forge friendships that would help me get through the job. I could email or call for advice -- essentially, it offered me the ability to have a shared experience with 50 other people who understood what I was going through.

Seven other panelists agreed that seminars, workshops, conferences, or courses are effective ways to help train incoming editors. Some panelists indicated the most effective way to teach leadership skills to incoming editors was for each newspaper to organize and present workshops or seminars that were specific to their newspapers' greatest leadership needs. One panelist who supervises a staff of 40 in producing a twice-weekly newspaper stated:

Have a newspaper leadership course every year. Invite the editor, the section editors and important players in the newsroom and go over leadership skills they need. Every paper is different, so things will have to be handled differently. Making sure the leaders know how to lead in their circumstances is very important.

Other panelists agreed, stating: "The best way to train new editors is to have a training workshop before they start their job, preferably during the last week of summer" and "seminars worked well for me when they dealt with ways of handling situations." At least one panelist indicated that one leadership training session conducted by an individual newspaper is inadequate to teach the necessary leadership skills. She recommended the newspaper "Incorporate a series of workshops that pinpoint the skills needed to get through the semester." Another panelist explains that regular seminars or workshops are valuable because they can help incoming or perspective leadership



candidates to better understand the various aspects of the role. He stated: “Having a yearly leadership conference to teach incoming editors about what they are about to get themselves into would be greatly helpful.”

Some panelists were emphatic about this need to fully inform incoming editors about the responsibilities associated with the top leadership position. A panelist who supervises a staff of 12 at a community college weekly stated: “They should be told what is expected of them before they even apply for the job.” Another panelist, who supervised a staff of 16 at a monthly publication, stated: “My staff all knew what my job as editor entailed. If they wanted to be part of something or learn how to do what I was doing, they were more than welcomed. I left my staff with no surprises.”

Three panelists indicated they considered experience in lower level leadership positions to be the best training to prepare editors for the top leadership role. One panelist stated: “I spent one year as assistant editor to learn the ropes of the editorship. I think this was adequate experience for me to jump into the position as chief editor.” Another stated: “It would help if an editor had experience at the paper before he or she applied for the job. While that would be the ideal situation, it should not be mandatory. Some people are just made for the role.”

Panelists were also asked to indicate the most effective way to educate incoming editors after they had assumed the top newsroom leadership position. Twenty-two panelists out of the 23 who participated in Round Three offered suggestions on ways to help new editors develop as leaders once they were in the role.

Twenty panelists responded to part two of Question 12. Panelists offered various ways editors can or do learn while on the job.

Eight panelists named “newspaper advisers” when asked to identify the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success during their tenure as editor in chief. It was the most frequently cited response. This may be a reflection of the long-standing mentoring relationship that exists between college newspaper advisers and editors. One panelist explained this relationship stating: “It helps to have a great adviser who really provides the only long-term continuity on the college newspaper. This person can really

be a steadying influence without being overbearing.” Panelists describe the adviser as an important source of feedback for emerging editors. Another panelist stated: “The newspaper adviser should be there to give the editor advice about his/her progress and how that person can improve their skill level.” Another panelist described the type of feedback an emerging editor should expect stating:

[Advisers should] have one-on-one training sessions with them [editors], going over their edits and being there for them to ask questions about their job in the first few weeks of the year. Maintain a relationship with them in which they know to go to you [adviser] if they have any questions throughout their tenure as editor.

This observation reflects the traditional adviser/student relationship where the adviser is an important source of constructive feedback for developing leaders. Constructive feedback is a theme that panelists indicate goes beyond the adviser/student relationship.

This constructive feedback theme is consistent with the importance several panelists place on the emerging editors seeking feedback from staff members, editorial boards, or others with leadership experience concerning their leadership performance. Several panelists also emphasize self-reflection as an important feedback tool for emerging leaders trying to develop leadership skills. One panelist stated: “Leaders should evaluate themselves and maybe even have the staff evaluate them.” Other panelists suggested “consistent check-up interviews with the staff and, possibly, advisers or board members” and “an editorial board or some sort of group that the senior editor reports to so that he or she is forced to evaluate their own competencies.” Another panelist explained that an editor should ask the staff to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses. This panelist emphasized: “The best way to learn is to find out what the perception is of your leadership.”

Only two of the 20 panelists responding to this question recommended attending conferences as a way to enhance the leadership skills of developing editors. One panelist stated: “Attend a conference to create a fresh outlook - it re-energizes the staff and offers a fresh perspective. Again, it gives people the opportunity to share their experiences.”

This panelist's view is consistent with a previous panelist's statement concerning the value she placed on the opportunity to meet and establish friendships with other college editors during a weeklong workshop. She contacted these editors afterward through email or by telephone to seek advice and to share experiences.

Two panelists suggested that the best way to provide on the job training for emerging newsroom leaders was to provide seminars or workshops specific to their newspapers. Their statements indicate they understand the need for ongoing or follow-up training. One panelist advocated: "On the job workshops to tighten up on leadership and managerial skills at least twice a month." Another panelist identified "communication and organization skills" as competencies that should be emphasized in a seminar. This panelist explained: "A leadership seminar would be a good idea. Something to teach organizational or communication skills could help."

The ability to communicate ranked first among all panelists as one of the three most important competencies for an incoming editor in chief.

Learning exclusively through on-the-job experience was not a preferred training method panelists advocated in their replies to question 12. Two panelists stated they thought on the job experience was the best way to teach developing leaders. One panelist stated: "I think the best training is experience. If mistakes are made, going over the situation constructively can help clarify where the situation went wrong." While this panelist asserts that experience is the best teacher, he also acknowledges that constructive criticism is an important component to that model. Another panelist was more emphatic in his assessment of experience stating: "They'll only learn on the job based on their experiences."

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter includes a brief summary of the study, discussion of results, major conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

#### **Summary of the Study**

There are studies that identify certain key or ideal characteristics of effective leadership for all leaders. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state “Leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they’re doing their best. And this behavior varies little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, and country to country. Good leadership is an understandable and a universal process” (p. xxiii).

However, Heilbrunn (1996) states “the field of leadership studies has remained hobbled by its epistemological commitments. The scientific quest for a generic model of leadership can take one only so far” (p. 8). He asserts that a one-size-fits-all generic model is too broad to be applied to all leadership roles. He states that leadership studies lack an adequate concern for the context in which leaders operate. Some industries, including the newspaper industry, have commissioned studies to identify the leadership competencies that are unique to their cultures. In her study of professional journalists, Peters (2001) states:

The perfect leader probably does not exist anywhere in nature. Moreover, each individual’s vision of ideal is strongly influenced by personal preference, background and circumstances. So one employee’s concept of “ideal” might be quite different from another’s. Still, there is value in knowing if there is widespread agreement about the most revered traits, for the absence of one of these would be more likely to generate more group consternation than the absence of any other trait less widely regarded as critical. (p. 39)

The purpose of this study was to identify the competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs experienced college newspaper leaders identify as most critical to their success in the college newsroom.

This information base can be used to inform incoming editors in chief and managing editors (those with the greatest leadership responsibilities) of the characteristics deemed most critical by their experienced peers. The results of this study can also be used by decision-makers who design curriculum for courses, workshops, and seminars, to better address the most critical needs of college newspaper editors. It also allows the leadership characteristics of college newsroom leaders to be compared to those of all leaders (Kouzes and Posner, 1995), and to those of professional newsroom leaders (Peters, 2001).

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the most significant leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced student editors say are necessary to be successful in the role of editor in chief?
2. How do the leadership competencies identified by the expert panelists as necessary for success in the student newsroom culture compare to those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders?
3. What recommendations do these editors have for the development and training of future editors?

Following a review of the literature, the researcher contacted 132 college newspaper advisers, who were members of College Media Advisers and asked them to nominate college newspaper editors for the study. Advisers nominated 48 potential panelists based on the advisers' assessments of the nominees' motivation to complete the study and their experience as editors in chief or managing editors. A group of 25 college newspaper editors, who were currently serving or who had recently served in the role of editor in chief or managing editor, were impaneled to serve as the experts for this computer-mediated Delphi study. Members of this homogeneous group were considered experts because they were individuals who possessed specific knowledge and had in-depth experience with the topic being researched (Scheele, 1975). The number of participants was in keeping with the literature concerning Delphi panel size which recommends no fewer than 10 and no more than 30 participants (Ziglio, 1996).

They included editors or former editors from 19 institutions nationwide, including 4-year public and private universities, and 2-year community colleges. This Web-based Delphi study allowed participation from a geographically diverse population that would have otherwise been difficult to assemble. Participants were therefore able to respond from their respective locations.

This Delphi study consisted of three rounds of electronic questionnaires and controlled feedback. The Web-based instrument was constructed by computer programmers at the Center for Distance Learning Research and resided on the Web server at the CDLR at Texas A&M University. The Website contained a description of the study, an information sheet, a demographic form (Appendix C), and instructions for proceeding to each round of the study.

The instruments used for this study were designed to answer the research questions that guided the study. The instruments were developed from the fall of 2003 to the spring of 2004. The 13 initial open-ended questions were developed to facilitate the “anonymous brainstorming” session Murry and Hammons (1995) describe as the “typical” first round used to elicit individual judgments or opinions from panel members. The instrument included questions concerning journalism competencies specific to the leadership role, leadership competencies they admired, leadership competencies they lacked, the differences in leadership and management, editors’ prior knowledge of leadership, as well as some of the questions Peters (2001) asked in her survey of professional journalists concerning leadership. Twenty-five panel-members responded to 13 questions in Round One. Replies to six of the questions were used to gather background information concerning the panelists prior knowledge of leadership and were not returned for consensus building. However, the results are included in this chapter. Responses to the remaining seven questions were analyzed and returned to the panel for consensus building in Round Two.

In Round Two, panelists were asked to rate responses to the seven questions developed in Round One. Using a 4-point Likert Scale, panelists rated 189 items. Twenty-three panelists responded to Round Two. Since the goal of the study was to identify competencies, skills, and behaviors college newsroom editors regard as most

important to their success, only those items with the highest rating were returned to panelists for consensus in Round Three.

In this final round, consensus was reached when panelists chose three items they considered most important from each of the lists of responses to the seven questions from Round Two. In Round Three, panelists were asked to identify leadership training they had received and if they would seek leadership training in the future. They were also asked to recommend effective ways to provide leadership training to help editors develop the leadership skills the panel deemed most important to success in that role.

## **Results**

Results from panelists' responses to questions concerning their prior knowledge of leadership are discussed in the following paragraphs. They include their views on management and leadership, their misconceptions about the role of the top newsroom leader before they assumed that role, and competencies they admired in previous leaders.

### **Understanding the Differences in Management and Leadership**

Thirteen of the panelists indicated they were aware of the differences in management and leadership, while 11 indicated they were not aware of the differences. Twenty-two panelists stated they thought awareness of the distinction between management and leadership was important for a college newsroom leader. However, four panelists stated they did not think the distinction was important (Table 9). Editors, in all cases, stated they viewed both management and leadership as important aspects of the top student newsroom leadership position.

Several panelists' replies demonstrated they were confused about the differences in management and leadership even though definitions of the two functions were provided for them (Table 10).

Whether or not panelists have a clear understanding of the differences in leadership and management, they place a high value on many of the skills experts say are specific to effective leadership and describe them as critical to success in the college newsroom. For example, many state that "motivation" or "the ability to inspire" the staff is important because the staff is often unpaid and many staff members are not journalism

majors and may not be planning to pursue journalism as a career. They indicate that it is the leader's ability to motivate or inspire his or her staff that enables the leader to secure the support of peers in embracing the leader's vision, reach goals, and make the final product the best it can be.

Discovering whether or not college editors' understand the differences between leadership and management was important because leadership experts consider both leadership and management essential to the success of organizations. Kotter (1990) explains that "leadership and management differ in terms of their primary function" (p. 7). The primary function of leadership, he points out, is to "produce useful change," while the primary function of management is to "produce orderly results which keep something working efficiently." Kotter states "... effective leadership coupled with competent management can produce extraordinary business success" (p. 19). It is also important to note that Kotter and other leadership experts acknowledge that there is overlap in the two roles. Northouse (1990) states:

When managers are involved in influencing a group to meet its goals, they are involved in leadership. When leaders are involved in planning, organizing, staffing, and controlling, they are involved in management. Both processes involve influencing a group of individuals toward goal attainment. (p. 10)

However, Kotter emphasizes "leadership by itself never keeps an organization on time and on budget year after year. And management by itself never creates significant useful change" (p. 7).

### **Student Editors' Prior Misconceptions of Top Newsroom Leader Responsibilities**

Members of the expert panel identified misconceptions they had concerning the top leadership role prior to entering that position. These included:

- Misconceptions concerning leadership competencies
- Misconceptions about commitment
- Misconceptions about management
- Misconceptions concerning staff



- Misconceptions concerning support from their college or university community

Panelists gave more examples of misconceptions concerning leadership competencies than any other category of misconceptions. Panelists recognized the leader's need for proficiency in journalism and management skills, but reported underestimating the extent to which leadership competencies and skills would affect their success in the top newsroom position.

While top newsroom leaders reported being surprised by the magnitude of the responsibilities and level of commitment expected of them by the staff and others, they reported being equally surprised by the lack of commitment on the part of many staff members. Panelists, even those with three or more years of leadership experience, reported their disappointment with staff members who do not honor their commitments to the newspaper. Although most college newspaper staffs are primarily volunteers, some editors in chief said they assumed their staffs would be dedicated as well as competent. They admit this was not often the case, especially when dealing with an unpaid staff.

Another misconception held by panelists concerned management skills. This misconception was related to the difficulty they had implementing certain management aspects that include controlling operations and staff, problem solving, and delegating responsibility.

The final misconception concerned panelists' disappointment with the amount of criticism, as well as the lack of support the campus newspaper received from students, faculty, and administration. They appeared to interpret this as insensitive behavior arising from a lack of awareness of the hard work involved with publishing a student newspaper and as somewhat "thankless" in light of the staff's contribution.

### **Leadership Competencies Panel Members Admired in Previous Newsroom Leaders**

Panelists identified leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors they admired in previous leaders before they assumed the role of top newsroom editor. These fit into 12 categories, including demonstrated competence; showed ability to inspire; demonstrated the ability to build a team; fostered a learning environment; valued each

staff member as an individual; valued the staff's input; had the ability to communicate a vision; showed dedication to the newspaper; offered encouragement; showed courage; showed creativity; and showed determination (Table 35).

Panelists offered the most examples of qualities they “admired” in leaders in the area of competence. They gave examples of expertise specific to leadership competence as well as examples of functional competence specific to the journalism craft. Kouzes and Posner (1997) explain that both functional and leadership competencies are needed for effective leadership. The panelists who included journalism competence in their answers gave them as one aspect of the role and never as the only skills necessary for success in that role. In fact, the panelists were able to articulate their understanding of the complex nature of the role by listing numerous examples of leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors they admired. Although “communication skills” is specifically identified by only one panelist, communication skills would be critical to the effective execution of other competencies identified by panelists.

The leadership skill that panelists described most often as one they admired was the ability of student leaders to keep their composure in the face of newsroom pressures. The intense pressure described by students as part of the newsroom culture may be one of the reasons they also admire leaders who “plan well” and have “the ability to balance being in school with a full-time job,” while also being “easy to get along with.”

Kouzes and Posner (1997) state that individuals who are able to respond to stressful situations with “psychological hardiness” or a positive mind set, are better prepared to take the stress that accompanies change in stride. This would also help to explain why some editors are able to “interact with top college administrators, “solve problems,” and make “difficult decisions”— three more “most admired” traits of college newsroom leaders.

Their replies indicate they are inspired by editors who help staff members understand their value to the newspaper. They admire leaders who can give people a purpose, make others feel important and needed, help students understand the value of their contributions, create a desire in others to excel, and editors who show their passion for improving the publication.

In particular, the ability to inspire teamwork is cited by panelists as an important skill for newsroom leaders. They admire the editors' ability to allow staff members to function independently while also fostering a "tight-knit group philosophy." Experts admire editors who show they care about the people, as much as the paper through their "availability to the staff," by "showing loyalty," and by demonstrating "devotion to the staff and its success." From the examples cited, it appears panelists place the majority of teambuilding responsibilities with the editor in chief.

The workplace atmosphere also appears to be significant where editors cited the leaders' ability to foster a learning environment as an admired skill important to the staffs' success. Panelists cited the importance of the editor, not only being able to teach and mentor the staff, but also the importance of the editor being available for and dedicated to training.

The ability to value each staff member as an individual is another competency that editors admire in leaders. This includes treating every person, regardless of his or her position on staff, respectfully and as an equal. Practices such as remembering names and commenting on reporters' recent copy were identified as specific ways leaders could demonstrate a respect for staff members' work.

Panelists cited several examples of skills they admired in editors that showed they valued the staff's input. The leader's ability to listen, especially to new or different ideas, was cited most often as critical to the overall well-being of the newspaper and its staff because it showed staff members that "every voice was heard. Geisler (2000) cites "active" listening as one of the characteristics of top leaders. According to Geisler, the single most important influence on an employee is the leader and one of the leader's most important strategies is mastering the art of "deep" or "active" listening. The examples panelists gave in categories of team building, fostering a learning environment, valuing each staff member as an individual, and valuing the staff's input, all suggest that panelists admire leaders who model inclusive behavior. The competencies they admire in these categories, such as listening, teaching, and mentoring require good communication skills.

The ability to communicate effectively is critical in helping a top newsroom editor to communicate a vision for the newspaper, another competency admired by editors. They admire those who communicate a vision for the paper that extends beyond their tenure that can be used as a basis for future decisions.

Panelists indicate a top editor's dedication to the newspaper as another admired trait. They describe the leaders' efforts to ensure the publication's growth and development as a reflection of dedication. They describe editors who worked to improve the publication and want to see the paper and its staff members succeed as "inspiring."

Panelists indicated they admired leaders who offered encouragement to the staff. Behaviors they cited included the ability to "praise the staff," editors who were "always helpful" and editors who "gave those eager to participate a chance."

Panelists also cited courage as a trait they admire in leaders. They cite admiration for leaders who were willing to "fight for a story" or coverage, who have "the ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism," and leaders who had "the ability to make strong, often controversial decisions."

One panelist identified "creativity" as an important trait, especially when an innovation was tempered with a respect for tradition and history. One panelist also cited "determination" as an admired trait in top newsroom leaders. Although mentioned by only one panelist, determination does relate to most of the previous categories.

### **Research Question One**

The first research question addressed in this study asked, "What are the most significant leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced student editors say are necessary to be successful in the role of editor in chief?" This question was addressed in all three rounds of the study. The panelists were asked to identify and reach consensus on those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors they considered most important to the effective execution of the role of top newsroom leader.

In order to fully explore and understand the competencies, skills, and behaviors necessary to the role of top newsroom leader, panelists were also asked to identify journalism competencies necessary for functional competency, leadership competencies

they lacked, how their leadership experiences shaped their understanding of the role, the criticality of leadership competencies unique to the college newsroom, and those competencies that separate an average leader from a great leader, and the leadership practices they implemented after becoming a top newsroom leaders.

Panelists were also asked to identify practices they employed that emulated those they admired in previous leaders. Their replies helped answer all three research questions. In Research Question One, these practices helped to define panelists' leadership behaviors. In Research Question Two, these practices were compared to Kouzes and Posner's (1997) five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership. These practices also helped to answer Research Question Three because the fundamental practices identified by the expert panel can be used for the development and training of future editors.

The expert panelists identified certain basic journalism competencies and skills as critical to the success of the top leadership position. These skills are not specific to leadership, but they are considered important because most leaders need "functional competence" in their field to be effective. In keeping with Kouzes and Posner's definition of leadership competency, journalism competency was treated as one dimension of leadership competency. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state they are "noticing a trend toward requiring more technical competence of leaders" (p. 25). This may be especially true in the college newsroom culture where it is necessary for newsroom leaders to be peer teachers (Harvey, 2002).

The panelists indicated that functional competency in journalism is necessary to a top newsroom leader's success and reflects the wide range of journalism skills and competencies panelists regard as important to their jobs. Journalism skills included "mastery of basis news story structures," "reporting skills," "writing," "copy editing skills," "design and layout," "AP Style," "mastery of computer software," "lead writing," "grammar skills," and "headline writing."

The journalism competencies included "understanding journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance," "knowledge of ethical standards in journalism," and "understanding the importance of news judgment." The high score these top three

competencies received reflect the importance these panelists place on the necessity of having high standards for this leadership role.

The expert panelists identified certain basic leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors as critical to the success of the top leadership position. Leadership competencies and skills were treated as one category (competency/skill).

The expert panelists indicated the most important leadership competencies/skills were the “ability to communicate” and the “ability to make tough decisions.” The panels’ ranking of these items may indicate their understanding of the role these items play in their success with the next highest ranked items, “ability to motivate” and “ability and willingness to educate your staff,” both of which experts explain require effective communication skills. (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, and Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997). The next four items “ability to build a team,” “ability to delegate,” “leads by example,” and the “ability to listen to staff” were ranked equally. Panelists’ were emphatic throughout the three rounds concerning the importance of team-building, delegating, setting an example, and listening as critical to the top leadership position. The relative ranking of these four items may be more of a reflection of the panelists being asked to choose the most important competency and/or skill. The panelists’ replies may be an indication that they regard the two top ranked items as essential to success in all other competencies and/ or skills.

The two highest ranked leadership behaviors were “a passion to improve and develop the newspaper” and “dedication to the paper and staff.” The high score these top two leadership behaviors received reflect the importance panelists place on the level of commitment and loyalty necessary for success in this role. The next highest ranked behaviors were “dependable” and “honesty.”

The expert panel rated the criticality of leadership competencies they previously identified as ones they lacked. Panelists reached consensus on “lacks ability to take charge” as the most critical from the list of eight deficiencies considered to have an impact on the performance of the top newsroom leader. However, there was no clear consensus about the criticality of the remaining deficiencies.

There was agreement among panel members that the role of editor in chief requires a high degree of dedication to meet the time commitment, frustration, and amount of responsibilities associated with the role. The two highest ranked experiences panelists identified as helping to shape their understanding of the role of editor in chief were “It’s not just a title, it is not glamorous, and it’s a difficult and often frustrating position,” and “It’s a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment.” The experience that ranked third was, “A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility.”

Panelists identified situations they considered unique to the role of top newsroom leader (as opposed to that of a professional newsroom leadership role). The results reflect their understanding of the college newsroom as a unique culture. The four highest ranked items epitomize this unique culture. Their perception of this culture may explain why “must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper” was the highest scoring statement. The next three highest ranked items “dealing with uncommitted students,” “staff changes more frequently,” and “college leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper,” all reflect the unique culture within which college newspaper leader’s work. The typical college newspaper staff is made up of mostly volunteer or low paid students who are relatively inexperienced, require more training, and are often short-term employees.

Panelists identified “dedication to the newspaper” as the highest ranked leadership competency, skill, or behavior that separates an average college newsroom leader from a great college newsroom leader. The panel’s ranking of this item is consistent with its highest ranked items in replies to other questions including, “experiences that helped shape their understanding of the role” of editor in chief and “leadership behaviors most important to the execution of the role of editor in chief.” The rankings of those items in multiple categories indicates there is agreement that the role requires a high degree of dedication to meet the time commitment, frustration, and amount of responsibilities associated with the role. Panelists also identify great college

newsroom leaders as those who are “ethical,” “have the ability to teach and guide their staffs,” and “are willing to go above or beyond the call of duty.”

### **Leadership Practices Employed by Top Newsroom Editors**

Panelists identified practices they employed that emulated those they admired in previous leaders. These practices help define panelists’ leadership behaviors and the system they used to accomplish a shared goal. Sayles (1993) states that successful leaders have the ability to build a system to which others are willing to commit.

Panelists identified leadership practices that demonstrated competence, showed ability to inspire, offered encouragement, showed value for each staff member as an individual, showed value for the staff’s input, showed ability to build a team, showed dedicated to the newspaper, practices that communicated a vision, practices that fostered a learning environment, showed creativity, and showed determination. A complete list of examples of how these practices were implemented by panelists is listed in Table (39).

A recurring theme is the need for college newsroom leaders to model practices that encourage staff members, empower them to succeed, and provide them with a sense of purpose.

Panelists’ replies indicated they understand the nature and complexity of the role of editor in chief and they model many of their leadership practices based on the behaviors of previous leaders. Most of the practices are examples of behaviors they held in high regard, tried to put into practice, and improve upon. In some cases, panelists cited behavior of former leaders as unprofessional and not worthy of emulation. In fact, they made an effort to model the opposite behavior.

Panelists emphasize the importance of leadership practices that demonstrate competence. An important competence is understanding the position as one that requires enormous responsibility and commitment that requires preparation. It also requires a wide range of competencies, skills, and behaviors, such as communicating, showing confidence, leading by example, demonstrating maturity, modeling a professional demeanor, demonstrating proactive behavior, and the ability to establish relationships.



Panelists report they tried to inspire their staff's by showing passion and enthusiasm for the job. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state leaders must inspire people by acting as "cheerleaders" who encourage people to "sign up for the duration." Panelists indicate that a passion for "a solid newspaper" often is the result of an editor's ability to "model their love and commitment to journalism." They model this behavior by treating the newsroom "like a real newsroom" and taking the job seriously "like it was a full-time job." This practice encouraged others to take their work seriously. Another important behavior panelists identified was the editors' ability to show the staff how to balance school and newspaper responsibilities. Panelists explained that it is important for editors to unite people by identifying a common goal such as "producing the best paper possible."

Panelists were emphatic about the importance of a leader's ability to offer daily encouragement to staff members because it helps people understand their significance to the newspaper and the significance of their individual contributions. They see encouragement as critical for students in a mostly volunteer organization. Panelists empathize with the students' plight to manage their responsibilities as staff members and students and see encouragement and recognition as critical to helping them succeed in both roles. They also placed importance on both public and private recognition of staff member's accomplishments. Examples included writing notes each week to those "doing an exceptional job," sending emails to staff "about the great jobs they did," and "increasing staff morale by offering tokens of appreciation such as \$5 gift certificates." One editor had her staff vote on the best story and photo of the issue and then made two certificates, one for the winner and one to post in the newsroom.

Panelists cited several examples of practices they used to show individual staff members they were valued. Some of the behaviors they emulated and admired in former leaders were as simple as remembering staff members by name, commenting on the strengths of recent assignments, spending more time speaking to staff members during the day to identify problems they could work together to solve, and holding monthly individual evaluations with section editors.

Panelists also placed a high value on leaders who make a sincere effort to consider the staff's input. In particular, they admire the ability of leaders to listen to their staff's ideas and recommendations. Panelists report it is important for an editor to make time to listen to staff members and to consider their opinions regardless of how busy they are with daily operations. Panelists cited examples of practicing the art of "active listening" and appear to understand the ability to listen as an important leadership skill. Geisler (2000) states that leaders initiate the process of "active listening" when they "invite the speaker to tell them more by asking questions in an encouraging way" (p. 13). Editors described practices that encouraged active listening such as asking the staff to "speak up in staff meetings to share their ideas, complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts."

Panelists described practices that facilitated teambuilding. One panelist reported giving everyone on staff a title or position to make them feel they were part of the team. They also cite establishing good working relationships with the adviser, advertising staff and newspaper staff members as good teambuilding practices. Some cited "bowling," "sleepovers," and other outside opportunities where staff members were able to relax and have fun, and to get to know one another as being beneficial to teambuilding.

Panelists indicated that dedication to the newspaper was a practice they admired in previous leaders and tried to model when they became editor in chief. Examples they cite include "pulling long hours," "having plenty of patience," "willing to put effort into the paper" and someone who "is there during vacation making changes to make the next semester even better." Some panelists considered the end product a reflection of themselves stating, "You get better results if you work hard."

Panelists reported that staff members should expect a high level of involvement from their top editors. One panelist reported he stayed until the last pages were finished and was the last to leave the office. This system, he stated, led to more involvement in the correction process by other members of the editorial staff who then felt obligated to remain and make final changes to their sections. This system, he stated, has endured and ultimately had a positive effect on the overall quality of the newspaper.

This panelist's response indicates he helped implement a plan to improve the editors' involvement in the final production of the newspaper. His vision was to improve the overall quality of the newspaper. He implemented a strategy of modeling the behavior he wanted to see, which eventually led to the realization of his vision.

Kotter (1990) states that leaders are effective when they establish direction, align people, and motivate and inspire them to achieve a vision. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that leaders must be able to communicate a vision, "a sense of direction and a sense of the future of the organization." "Leaders" they state, "must know where they are going if they expect others to join them in the journey" (p. 23). Other panelists also offered similar examples of realizing short and long term goals or visions for their staffs and newspapers.

Panelists also emphasized the importance of editors knowing the rewards, both short and long term, of working for a college newspaper. It helps inspire them to meet goals. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state: "Leaders must inspire our confidence in the validity of the goal. Enthusiasm and excitement are essential and signal the leader's personal commitment to pursuing that goal" (p.24). An editor stated: "I tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best newspaper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them."

Many of the panels' examples of good leadership practices are evidence that panelists tried to provide an environment that fostered learning. Many of their practices show an understanding of the need to pass along important skills to new and veteran staff members who aspire to become better journalists and leaders. Drucker (2002) explains the principle way for leaders to build strong relationships and teams is to look for the potential in people and to spend time developing that potential. Most student journalists are still honing their own skills, as journalists and leaders, when they accept the top newsroom role. Panelists' replies showed an understanding of the training staff members require. Panelists described using their newly learned skills to train at workshops at the beginning of each semester in order to help new staff members sharpen their skills. They also report teaching skills to their staffs by delegating responsibilities and by sending out e-mails listing advice on how to improve. One panelist offered advice on preparing new

staff members for future leadership positions by starting to develop their leadership skills during their freshman year. Panelists indicate peer teaching plays an important role in the practice of fostering a learning environment. Harvey (2002) emphasizes peer teaching or “students teaching students” as an important aspect of newsroom leadership.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question addressed in this study asked: How do the leadership competencies identified by the expert panelists as necessary for success in the student newsroom culture compare to those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) for all leaders, and Peters (2001) for professional newsroom leaders?

This question was addressed in all three rounds of the study. Round One questions 4, 5, 6 and 12 address research question two. Replies to questions 6 and 12 were returned for consensus building as questions 2 and 7 in rounds Two and Three.

### **Comparison to Kouzes and Posner (1995)**

The leadership competencies identified as qualities editors “most admired” in student newsroom leaders prior to their actual experience in the top leadership role are presented in Table 36 where they are compared to the list of 20 characteristics of admired leaders generated by Kouzes and Posner (1997). Of the examples given, 16, or 75 percent, were equivalent to or were similar to those identified by Kouzes and Posner.

In their responses to question four, the panelists did not name equivalent or similar traits to 4 of the top 20 on the list generated by Kouzes and Posner, including honest, intelligent, ambitious, and independent. Although four of these traits or characteristics were not identified some could be implied based on responses, such as “knowledge,” “ability to perform any of the functions of the staff,” and “ability to teach.”

When asked to identify the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors they thought were most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief, panelists’ initial responses were identical or equivalent to 90 percent of those identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995) as critical for all leaders. This increase may be the result of panelists’ experience in the role, which provided sufficient time for them to develop insights into the leadership traits required for the effective execution of the role.

The only two characteristics in Kouzes and Posner's list not identified by panelists as important to the role of top college newsroom leader were "ambitious" and "independent." There were no responses, positive or negative, concerning "independent." In fact, the only responses that were similar or equivalent to "ambitious" were identified as failings in panelists' responses to question 12, concerning significant shortfalls among college newspaper editors. The examples panelists gave that describe "ambitious" behaviors they dislike included, "resume-builders who regard college publications as a stepping stone to a job in the real world" and "the majority are either political sycophants or byline junkies."

In Round Three the panelists reached consensus on the competencies and behaviors they identified as most critical for effective execution of the top newsroom leadership position. This list of competencies and behaviors is compared to Kouzes and Posner's list for all leaders and is shown in Table 47 which demonstrates panelists agree with 12 of the characteristics that appear on Kouzes and Posner's list for all leaders. While the characteristics in the panel's list are not ranked in the same order of importance as they are in Kouzes and Posner's list, panelists none-the-less considered them important to the top newsroom leadership role. This list includes the seven highest ranked characteristics in Kouzes and Posner's list, indicating there is agreement concerning top ranked characteristics for all leaders and for college newsroom leaders. Kouzes and Posner's research consistently shows the four most important values or characteristics for all leaders as honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. The panel also named these four values or characteristics as important to the success of college newsroom leaders as shown in Tables 47 and 48.

In Kouzes and Posner's list of 20 key traits for all leaders, honesty received the highest ranking. Honesty ranked fourth in the expert panels' list of key behaviors for top college newsroom leaders. Forward-looking ranked second for all leaders, but ranked first in the list of key behaviors for top college newsroom leaders. Inspiring ranked third for all leaders and ranked third in the list of key competencies for college newsroom leaders. Unlike the Kouzes and Posner's study where "competencies" was a single category, this study asked panelists to choose the top three competencies from a list of

15. From the list of 15 competencies, college newsroom leaders gave “ability to communicate” the highest ranking. “Communication” or “ability to communicate” does not appear on Kouzes and Posner’s list, but would be imbedded or implied in other traits such as inspiring or competent.

The panel named two behaviors and four competencies that do not have equivalent characteristics to the Kouzes and Posner list. These characteristics may be more specific to the college newsroom arena. The panel ranked “consistent” and “decisive” eighth and ninth in a list of 10 behaviors considered most critical to the role of editor in chief. The panel ranked “ability to identify the newspaper’s strengths and weaknesses” as 10 in a list of 15 competencies. This was followed by “ability to learn from and admit mistakes,” “ability to gain your fellow worker’s respect,” and “expects results from staff.”

It is important to note that panelists exercise these competencies, skills, and behaviors, within a unique arena. Heilbrunn (1996) emphasizes that leaders operate in a variety of arenas and that “successful captaincy... does not necessarily transfer to other fields” (p. 8). Panelists indicated that dealing with situations unique to that role requires multiple leadership competencies. The situations they identified as unique to that role (as opposed to that of a professional newsroom leadership role) included dealing with a newspaper staff of mostly volunteer or low paid students; staff members who are relatively inexperienced, requiring more training; and short-term employees who often must balance school, newspaper, and sometimes off campus job responsibilities. The staff’s short-term goals include working for the newspaper, their long-term goals are to graduate.

### **Leadership Practices: Student Newsroom Leaders Compared to All Leaders**

The expert panel identified ways they used their experiences with previous leaders to develop and model their own leadership practices when they were in the top newsroom leadership roles. These fundamental practices are described by panelists as helping them bring about change, realize goals, encourage and inspire others, become stronger role models, and recognize accomplishments of the staff. The panelists

leadership practices facilitated a comparison to Kouzes and Posner's (1997) five fundamental practices (Table 40) that serve as the basis for helping leaders develop. Those five practices are: challenging the process, encouraging the heart, modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and enabling others to act. Kouzes and Posner state these practices "have stood the test of time" and were common to leaders who have achieved extraordinary success. Many of the panelists' responses exemplify these practices that Kouzes and Posner call the "Ten Commitments of Leadership." Taken as a whole, the panelists' responses indicate that they agree with Kouzes and Posner's five fundamental practices.

### **Comparison to Peters (2001)**

A comparison of Peters' (2001) list of ideal traits of top professional newspaper leaders to the top traits of college newspaper leaders identified in this study demonstrates panelists agree with eight of the characteristics that appear on Peters' list (Table 48). While these characteristics are not ranked in the same order of importance in the panel's list as they are in Peters' list, they are none-the-less considered important to the top college newsroom leadership role. This list includes five of the six highest ranked characteristics in Peters' list of ideal traits of top newsroom leaders indicating there is agreement concerning top ranked characteristics.

In their final rankings, panelists did not identify equivalent or similar characteristics for seven of the 15 on Peters' list. These seven are hiring and promoting wisely, people-oriented approach to policies, ensuring fair/competitive salaries, balancing profit and demands/news values, delivers fair discipline, and communicates news values outward. Some of these traits such as hiring and promoting wisely, balancing profit demands and news values, and ensuring fair/competitive salaries have far less relevance in the college newsroom.

Two of the remaining traits in Peter's list, "delivers fair discipline," and "communicates news values outward," were not chosen by top professional newsroom editors or top college newsroom editors. However, no top newsroom leaders in Peter's study identified "emphasizes constant staff learning," as one of their top three choices,

whereas six top college newsroom leaders, from the panel of 23, selected an equivalent in “ability and willingness to educate your staff.”

It is important to note that in Peters’ study, professional journalists were given a list of traits or characteristics and asked to choose from that list. The traits or characteristics included in the expert panel’s list were generated by the panel during Round One. As a result, the college journalists identified many competencies and behaviors that do not appear on Peters’ list. That may not mean that professional journalists do not consider them important but Peters did not include them in her list of traits. They may be more critical to college journalists. The “ability to motivate” for example, is ranked third in a list of 15 leadership competencies identified by panelists. There is no comparable item in Peters’ list. The same is true for “ability to delegate,” “leads by example,” “ability to listen to staff,” “ability to identify the paper’s strengths and weaknesses,” the “ability to learn from and admit mistakes,” and “ability to gain your fellow worker’s respect.”

The most striking differences become evident when comparing the panels’ list of leadership behaviors with Peter’s list of leadership traits. The panel ranked “dedication to the paper and staff” second in a list of 10 leadership behaviors. There is no comparable item in Peters’ list. The same is true for “dependable,” “honesty,” “open-minded,” “fair,” “motivated,” and “mature.” That may not mean that professional journalists do not consider them important but Peters did not include them in her list of traits.

Peters’ (2001) list of significant shortfalls (failings) of top professional newspaper editors was compared to a list of shortfalls generated by the expert panel of top college newspaper editors. When the results of these two studies are compared (Table 53) their replies indicate there is agreement among professional and college journalists that a lack of communication between the top editor and the staff is seen as one of the most significant shortfalls or failings.

Peters found that the greatest shortfalls of top editors fell within the “general category of too little contact and communication with staff” (p. 41). Nineteen of the 23 panelists chose “Inability to communicate and consult with staff” as one of their three choices, making it the top ranked shortfall of college newsroom leaders. The fourth



ranked shortfall identified by panelists was “failure to maintain relationships with the staff.” Top professional newspaper editors ranked “Too little communication with staff” as second from a list of 13. In fact, supervisors and nonsupervisors at small, midsize, and metro papers named “Out of touch with staff concerns,” “Too little communication with the staff,” and “Insufficient feedback” among the five greatest failings of top editors (p. 41). “Too little contact and communication” has been identified as a problem in both the college and professional newsroom arenas. Bass (1990) states that “considerable evidence has accumulated to demonstrate the connections between competence in communicating and satisfactory performance as a leader and manager” (p.111).

The remaining top ranked shortfalls for professional journalists, “unrealistic expectations,” “insufficient guidance of managers,” and “inadequate contact with the community” were also shortfalls identified by college newsroom leaders in responses to previous questions. Their absence from the panelists’ final list and their high ranking in Peters’ list for professional newsroom leaders may be a reflection of the arenas in which these newsroom leaders work.

### **Research Question Three**

The third and final research question addressed in this study asked, “What recommendations do these editors have for the development and training of future editors?” This question was addressed in Round Three.

In their replies to previous questions, college newsroom leaders indicated they placed a high value on many of the competencies, skills, and behaviors experts say are specific to effective leadership and described those characteristics as critical to their success.

Conger emphasizes the need for deep skill development. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) agree with Conger and also argue that “our culture consistently fails to support the growth and development of leadership” (p. 45).

Many leadership scholars maintain leadership can be taught (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997, Conger 1992). Therefore, the final five questions (8, 9, 10, 11, 12) requested information concerning panelists’ leadership training and their

recommendations for effective ways to teach or develop leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors in college newsroom leaders.

Most panelists reported an average of 2.5 to 3 years' experience working on a college newspaper prior to taking a top newsroom position, including serving at least one of those years in a leadership role (section editor, sports editor, editorial editor), but not the top leadership role.

More than half the panelists indicated they had not received leadership training as part of the preparation for the top newsroom leadership role. They learned leadership skills through on-the-job training in previous leadership positions. Some members of this panel indicated they were recruited to take the top newsroom position directly from the rank of reporter. They began their positions without leadership training or even the benefit of holding previous newsroom leadership positions.

Of the 43 percent who reported they attended leadership training prior to assuming the top newsroom leadership role, most of the training panelists' describe was not specific to leadership or were single, one-time seminars or workshops. Conger (1992) states that "a single, one time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change" (p.192). Only 9 panelists, or 39 percent, reported receiving leadership training during his or her tenure. Of those who indicated they did receive additional training, 5 cited leadership seminars held during national media conventions as additional training. These seminars, offered under the "leadership" rubric, are usually an hour in duration and may include a variety of issues ranging from motivating the staff to time management (CMA 2004). While they may be useful in introducing important leadership concepts to participants, they do not necessarily serve as "follow-up" seminars that reinforce previously introduced concepts. The content for college newspaper editor leadership seminars varies from conference to conference. The subject matter often ranges from "motivating staff," a leadership skill, to "budgeting" and "when to refuse advertising," which are management skills. The University of Georgia and Cox Institute for Newspaper Management Studies sponsor an annual week-long management seminar for college newspaper editors in August. The contents of the seminar are driven

by a survey applicants complete prior to the seminar which includes 23 topics or areas of interest. The seminar is limited to 50 students.

Four panel members offered annual or semi-annual school sponsored training sessions including daylong retreats that focused on interpersonal skills and in-house lectures as the training they received during their tenure. Panelist's indicated they also relied on the adviser and general manager for guidance on leadership matters throughout the year on an "as needed" basis. One respondent indicated they used trips to the local newspaper as a way to develop leadership skills while serving as editor in chief.

While these seminars and retreats may have been informative and offered valuable ideas, panelists did not indicate whether or not the training they received was designed to reinforce or follow up leadership training they received at national conferences or were specifically designed to meet the leadership needs of their individual newsrooms. There is no evidence that there is a structure in place sufficient to reinforce prior leadership training. Experts emphasize that leadership development requires reflection, understanding, and practice along with frequent reinforcement (Bennis, 1994). Student newsroom leaders have only a limited time to learn the leadership skills necessary for that role. National leadership seminars lack the adequate leadership content, concentration on significant leadership skills and competencies, and necessary follow-up opportunities to make them effective in meeting the leadership needs of college newsroom leaders.

There is a long history of students having a close working relationship with their college newspaper advisers. It is generally assumed that the college newspaper adviser has a high level of contact with, and influence on, the top newsroom leader. Sixteen panel members identified their publication advisers as the person who had the greatest influence on their leadership. This is evidence that advisers did play a major role in leadership development for 73 percent of this panel. In describing their interaction with advisers, the characteristic they cited most frequently was the opportunity to interact on a regular (daily) basis. They also indicated their advisers played an important role in helping them transition into the top leadership role. Students who need leadership guidance will often turn to advisers for help and advice on a daily basis. While this is

helpful, their advisers' leadership knowledge may also be limited. Advisers are often "socialized" leaders who have gained their knowledge from trial and error experiences in their role as advisers. Their anecdotal advice is based on experience, which is important, and often accurate, but not informed by scholarly research.

Other qualities displayed by their advisers as positive influences on their ability to lead included holding "high standards," being a "moral guide," and having a high level of "dedication to the newspaper." Harvey (2002) states that "while advisers are nurturing authority figures, it is the students who must provide leadership" to train new editors. His study sought to develop a peer training program to help college editors become better teachers and newsroom leaders among their peers at Pennsylvania State University's, *Daily Collegian* (p.10).

Seven of the panelists indicated that peers, mostly former editors, had the most powerful influence on their leadership development and ability to lead. One editor indicated he relied on trusted staff, rather than an adviser or previous editor, for "honest evaluation and criticism."

The most powerful examples of peer influence on leadership development were given by panel members who offered completely different experiences — both positive and negative. The most effective leadership training one panel member indicated she received was from her editor in chief, who "took her under her wing" to train her as managing editor, despite the editor's numerous duties and jobs. One panel member reported being influenced by a former editor in chief whose actions demonstrated the leadership traits experts state exemplify leadership. He described the editor in chief as being skilled at developing a vision, communicating that vision and getting the staff to embrace that vision. He never settled for mediocre work, was committed to high ethical standards, and was willing to fight for journalistic principles in the face of overwhelming opposition.

These are examples of leaders who communicate high expectations and inspire followers to become committed to the shared vision of the organization, behavior described by Bass and Avolio (1994) as inspirational motivation. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that "It's not enough for the leader to have a dream about the future. A

leader must be able to communicate the vision in ways that encourage us to sign on for the duration” (p. 24).

These behaviors were in sharp contrast to behaviors a panel member observed in her former editor in chief which had an enormous negative impact on her concept of leadership. Her predecessor “micromanaged,” did not realize the importance of “humility” and “apologizing,” and did not understand that “awards and tricks do not make up for actual motivation.”

Panelists’ replies indicate both advisers and college newsroom leaders have their own unique role in helping to develop future newsroom leaders. These panelists indicated they looked to the adviser as a valuable resource and for guidance and encouragement. However, when attempting to develop their own leadership style, panelists looked to their experiences with previous editors. While advisers offer continuous encouragement and guidance, former leaders, both good and bad, have an impact on the leadership style and development of those who succeed them.

While panelists state that advisers and peers have a significant impact on their ability to lead and to their leadership development, more than half stated that formal leadership training is a valuable supplement to their leadership development.

Thirteen panelists indicated they would seek formal training (course, seminar or workshop) if they accepted another leadership position. Nine panelists indicated they would not seek additional leadership training. Of those who would seek training, their replies indicate they realize the complex nature of leadership and they recognize the need to maintain current skills as well as to learn new skills. Despite the value they place on developing leadership skills while on the job, they recognize that formal leadership training can help to provide them with a more comprehensive set of leadership skills.

Several panelists offered detailed explanations describing the reasons they would seek further leadership training if they accepted another leadership role. Those included the opportunity to review leadership principles, the opportunity to address leadership challenges of the new role and gain reassurance that the way they intend to proceed is correct for that leadership role.

In their replies to previous questions, panelists described certain aspects of their leadership roles as being unique to the college newsroom arena. The unique culture within which college newspaper leaders work requires multiple leadership competencies. Top editors often must manage the daily operation of the paper while also dealing with a staff that frequently changes, is made up of mostly volunteer or low-paid, short-term employees, who are sometimes uncommitted, who must balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper, and who are relatively inexperienced, thus requiring more training.

One panelist, in his reply concerning future leadership training, said he would seek training if faced with another leadership position because he does not consider his newspaper leadership training, both on-the-job and formal, as necessarily transferable to leadership positions in other arenas. Leaders, he indicated, need experience and training that is specific to their respective arenas.

He explained that while “some parts of leadership cannot be taught” the competencies and skills specific to a field or organization can be, and those new to that field should seek training to address them. He stated that he was well acquainted with the competencies necessary for college newsroom leadership, but if faced with leadership in an unrelated field he would make an effort to learn about that field to be both comfortable and effective. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that it is significant for a new leader to learn the operations of the business they intend to lead. In fact, they report seeing a trend toward requiring more technical or functional competence in leaders. They emphasize that functional competence is but one aspect of leadership. They state: “Expertise in leadership is another dimension of competence. And the abilities to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage must be demonstrated as well, if leaders are to be seen as capable” (p. 25). This panel also agreed that functional competence (in journalism) is an important aspect of the college newsroom leader’s role.

Most of the nine panelists who indicated they would not seek formal training emphasized the importance they placed on the “hands on” training they received on-the-job. They describe this experience as the way to gain the leadership expertise sufficient to be successful in that role. They regard formal training as more “motivational than

educational” because “weekend-long programs” are insufficient to teach leadership skills.

These nine panelists do not see leadership courses, seminars, or workshops as relevant to their leadership development and question whether leadership skills can be taught through formal training. Instead, they see their experience as editor in chief as the best training for future leadership roles. They cite “team-building” and “communication” as skills that can only be improved upon with practice. They emphasize that no amount of training makes up for hands-on experience, especially in regard to the value of learning from mistakes. Hands-on experiences, they explain, provide the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Without these experiences, one panelist stated: “things you were taught mean nothing.” Bennis (1994) states that “failure and mistakes are major sources of vital experience ... there can be no growth without risks and no progress without mistakes” (p.185). However, he also emphasizes “the need for education, both formal and informal”(p. 9).

Approximately 41 percent of the panel indicated that they consider actual experience to be the greatest benefit in developing their leadership skills.

These panelists’ views are, at least in part, consistent with experts opinions that emphasize leadership development requires practice—that practice (on-the-job training) is one element of leadership development (Rost, 1991).

However, Born (1996) emphasizes that leadership programs need better scholarship and higher standards, rather than on-the-job training. He states: “Precisely in an age when high level critical thinking and academic skills are more important than ever for directing tasks, planning strategically, achieving, and, yes, even leading, the rhetoric of experimental “hands-on” education, so crucial in the leadership oeuvre, corrodes that understanding” (p. 48).

According to Kouzes and Posner (1995) “formal leadership training and education can be of greater importance in developing (leadership) skills” than experience or learning from other people (p. 332). The authors say leadership training does not have to involve hours spent in a formal classroom setting or in extended workshops. They state:

A group of you might teach yourselves: have everyone read a magazine article or book (chapter by chapter); then hold a brown-bag discussion at lunch time of how the ideas might be used or adapted or modified in your department, workgroup, or function. (p. 333)

In their replies concerning the most effective way to educate new editors before they assume the top newsroom leadership role, 50 percent, or 11 of the 22 panelists indicated that critical information concerning this leadership position can best be transferred by the outgoing editor.

Panelists indicate the outgoing editor plays a key role in the transfer of critical information regarding the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to the editor in chief or managing editor's success.

Panelists suggested several ways this transfer of information can be accomplished. They suggest that editors keep journals of their experiences to give to those who succeed them as a way to help the incoming editor "put the position in perspective" and "learn from another's experience." Another suggestion was the implementation of a mentor program that identifies potential leaders early in their college newspaper careers, and begins training them for future leadership positions immediately. Harvey (2002) developed "a training program for first-time editors at independent student newspapers to give them the necessary tools to become better teachers and newsroom leaders among their peers" (p. 5). Harvey's study is a step in the right direction because it addresses leadership training as an integrated part of the college newspaper experience. The training curriculum is informed by two years of research and is taught in a way the students say is most effective.

Panelists indicated the outgoing editor in chief plays a key role in training his or her predecessor. They suggested outgoing editors develop a plan that allows the new leader to transition into the role while they are still there to offer guidance and can best facilitate the transfer of skills and advice to the new editor.

This transfer of information can also be accomplished when it is possible for the current editor in chief to engage in ongoing communication throughout the year with his or her predecessor.



In spite of the already large number of responsibilities that make the top newsroom editor's job a daunting task, the panel considers the training of their successors, one of the editor's key roles.

They recommend a transition that begins early while the outgoing editor is still in that role and can communicate regularly to share experiences and insight.

They also recommend sending the incoming editors in chief to seminars where they have the opportunity to meet other students in their same positions and can establish contacts. These people can serve as peer advisers who can be contacted for advice and encouragement through e-mail or by telephone.

Seven other panelists agreed that seminars, workshops, conferences, or courses are effective ways to help train incoming editors. Some panelists indicated the most effective seminars were those organized and presented by each newspaper and were specific to that newspaper's greatest leadership needs. At least one panelist indicated that one leadership training session conducted by an individual newspaper is inadequate to teach the necessary leadership skills and that a series of workshops that pinpoint the skills needed to get through the semester were necessary. Another panelist explains that regular seminars or workshops are valuable because they can help incoming or perspective leadership candidates to better understand the various aspects of the role.

Some panelists were emphatic about this need to fully inform incoming editors about the responsibilities associated with the top leadership position emphasizing that the incoming editor should not be met with unnecessary surprises.

Three panelists indicated they considered experience in lower level leadership positions to be the best training to prepare editors for the top leadership role. One stated that while experience is ideal, it should not be mandatory for someone applying for the role, because they stated: "some people are just made for the role."

Panelists were also asked to identify the most effective way to educate incoming editors after they had assumed the top newsroom leadership position. Twenty-two panelists out of the 23 who participated in Round Three offered suggestions on ways to help new editors develop as leaders once they were in the role.

Twenty panelists responded to part two of question 12, which asked editors to identify effective ways to provide on-the-job leadership training for editors who are serving in the position of top newsroom leader.

In the most frequently cited response, eight panelists named “newspaper advisers” when asked to identify the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success during their tenure as editor in chief. This may be a reflection of the long-standing mentoring relationship that exists between college newspaper advisers and editors. Panelists explained this relationship as the only long-term continuity on the college newspaper; a steadying influence; an important source of feedback on progress and advice on how to improve skills. This observation reflects the traditional adviser/student relationship where the adviser is an important source of constructive feedback for developing leaders. However, constructive feedback is a theme that panelists indicate goes beyond the adviser/student relationship.

This constructive feedback theme is consistent with the importance several panelists place on emerging editors seeking feedback from staff members, editorial boards, or others with leadership experience concerning their leadership performance so they are forced to evaluate their competencies.

This panel emphasized the importance of editors actively seeking peoples’ perception of their leadership as a step to addressing their weaknesses and as a tool for reaffirming their strengths. Several panelists also emphasized self-reflection as an important feedback tool for emerging leaders trying to develop leadership skills. Kouzes and Posner (1993) stress that becoming self-aware through a process of self assessment and reflection is the first key step a leader must take to realize his or her full potential. Bennis (1989) agrees and states that “until you know your strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word” (p. 40). Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state that “self-reflection is the first key to becoming a leader” (p. 70). Keeping a journal is one way they recommend developing leaders can reflect upon and monitor both successes and failures. The second step to becoming a leader according to Bennis and Goldsmith, is

“interaction with others who tell us about ourselves.” This includes reflective “backtalk” from colleagues.

Only two of the 20 panelists recommended attending conferences as a way to enhance the leadership skills of developing editors. Even then, they emphasize it as more of a “re-energizing” experience that offers “fresh perspectives” than a way to help editors develop leadership skills. However, panelists do consider conferences as a way to meet and establish friendships with other college editors who can be contacted in the future through e-mail or by telephone as a way to seek advice and to discuss shared experiences.

Two panelists suggested the best way to provide on-the-job training for emerging newsroom leaders was to provide seminars or workshops specific to their newspapers’ needs. Their statements indicate they understand the need to design seminars or workshops that address those competencies, skills, and behaviors they identified as most important to their unique situations. This suggests that even after the competencies, skills, and behaviors have been established for effective college newsroom leadership, that it may be necessary to further customize seminars to better meet the needs of individual newsrooms.

Although two panelists indicated they thought on-the-job experience was the best way to teach developing leaders, learning exclusively through on-the-job experience was not a training method most panelists advocated in their replies to question 12. Even these panelists, who assert that experience is the best teacher, acknowledge that constructive criticism is an important component to that model.

### **Conclusions**

1. Panelists, in all cases, stated they saw both management and leadership as important aspects of the top student newsroom leadership position, yet only 54 percent indicated they understood the differences in management and leadership. The skills panelists used to address the unique situations they face in the college newsroom required both leadership and management skills. However, panelists indicate that it is leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors that enable the leader to motivate or inspire peers to embrace the leader's vision, to reach goals, and to produce the best final product. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that "the abilities to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage must be demonstrated as well, if leaders are to be seen as capable" (p. 25). Therefore, the panel indicates, a leader's ability to motivate and inspire is critical to a college editor's success in an organization made up of mostly unpaid staff, many who are not journalism majors and may not be planning to pursue journalism careers, are sometimes uncommitted, have a high turnover rate, and are made up of students who must balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper. They cite encouragement as a critical practice in a mostly volunteer organization where it is important for people to understand their significance to the newspaper and the significance of their individual contributions. Kotter explains motivating and inspiring as "energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs" (p.6). It is, therefore, critical for college newspaper editors to understand the primary functions of management and leadership. They have identified leadership skills as critical to their success in securing the support of peers in embracing the leader's vision, reaching goals, and making the final product the best it can be in a mostly volunteer organization.
2. Prior to actually assuming the role of top newsroom editor, students had misconceptions concerning the magnitude of the responsibility and level of commitment required, even those who have previous leadership experience. They underestimate the extent to which leadership competencies and skills affect their success; the lack of commitment by many staff members; the difficulty of

implementing management aspects that include controlling, problem solving, and delegating responsibility; and the lack of support and amount of criticism they receive from students, faculty, and administration.

3. Panelists most admired previous newsroom leaders who demonstrated competence; ability to inspire; the ability to build a team; fostered a learning environment; valued each staff member as an individual; valued the staff's input; ability to communicate a vision; showed dedication to the newspaper; offered encouragement; and showed courage; creativity; and determination.
4. Panelists admired previous leaders who maintained composure. Panelists admired previous leaders who demonstrated what Kouzes and Posner (1995) call "psychological hardiness" in handling stressful situations such as ability to "interact with top college administrators, "solve problems," and make "difficult decisions"—three more "most admired" traits of college newsroom leaders.
5. Panelists admired previous newsroom leaders who were successful at teambuilding and place the majority of teambuilding responsibilities with the editor in chief.
6. Panelists admired previous leaders who had mastered the art of active listening, a skill Geisler (2000) states is one of the leader's most important strategies. Panelists describe "active" listening as critical to the overall well-being of the newspaper and its staff.
7. Panelists admired previous leaders who were able to communicate a vision for the paper that extended beyond their tenure that can be used as a basis for future decisions. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that "vision is the force that invents the future" (p. 10).
8. Panelists admired previous editors who "inspired" them by showing dedication and determination to see the paper and its staff members succeed.
9. Panelists admired previous leaders who offered encouragement to the staff. Behaviors they cited included the ability to "praise the staff," editors who were "always helpful" and editors who "gave those eager to participate a chance."
10. Panelists admired previous leaders who had courage to fight for coverage, the ability to take a stand in the face of criticism and to make decisions in spite of controversy.

11. Panelists identified 10 functional (journalism) skills editors consider important to the top newsroom leader's success, the most important of which are "mastery of basic news story structures" and "reporting skills." These skills are not specific to leadership, however, for the purposes of this study, journalism competency was treated as one dimension of leadership competency. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state most leaders need "functional competence" in their field to be effective and they are "noticing a trend toward requiring more technical competence of leaders" (p. 25). This may be especially true in the college newsroom culture where it is necessary for newsroom leaders to teach functional competencies to staff members.
12. Panelists identified nine functional (journalism) competencies editors consider important to the top newsroom leader's success, the most important of which are "understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance;" "knowledge of ethical standards in journalism;" and "understands importance of news judgment."
13. Panelists identified the most important leadership competencies/skills as the "ability to communicate" and the "ability to make tough decisions." The panels' ranking of these items may indicate their understanding of the role these items play in their success with the next highest ranked items, "ability to motivate" and "ability and willingness to educate your staff," both of which require effective communication skills. The ability to make tough decisions was also emphasized by panelists in replies concerning skills they admired in previous leaders. They cite admiration for leaders who were willing to "fight for a story" or coverage, who have "the ability to take a stand in the face of enormous criticism," and leaders who had "the ability to make strong, often controversial decisions." These leaders demonstrated an ability to confront challenges and accept responsibility. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state: "More than anything else, leadership is about creating a new way of life. And to do that, leaders must foster change, take risks, and accept the responsibility for making change happen" (p. 39). Kouzes and Posner state "social psychologists have documented empirically [that] challenge raises motivational and performance levels" (p. 39).

14. Panelists agreed that the leadership behaviors most important to the role of editor in chief included the “leader’s passion to improve and develop the newspaper” and his or her “dedication to the paper and staff.” The high score these top two leadership behaviors received reflect the importance panelists place on the level of commitment and loyalty necessary for success in this role.
15. The expert panel agreed the “lack of ability to take charge” was the greatest failing of college newspaper editors in chief and had the greatest impact on performance.
16. After serving in the role of editor in chief, panelists perceive the role as a difficult, unglamorous, often frustrating position that required a significant time commitment. However, their experiences also shaped their perception of the role as one that affords a capable editor the opportunity to transform a newspaper and build credibility.
17. Panelists identified circumstances unique to the college newsroom culture (as opposed to that of a professional newsroom culture). These unique circumstances include the responsibility of publishing the paper while also managing daily operations, and helping those around them manage; dealing with uncommitted students; a staff that changes frequently; and the pressure to be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper. They describe the typical college newspaper staff as made up of mostly volunteer or low paid students who are relatively inexperienced, and require more training. Identifying the unique context in which these student leaders work is important when considering the competencies, skills, and behaviors necessary for their success in that arena. Heilbrunn (1996) states that leadership studies lack an adequate concern for the context in which leaders operate. He asserts that “thanks to academic neglect, we are largely clueless as to what makes a strong religious leader, culture leader, reform leader, intellectual leader, sports leader” (p. 9).
18. Panelists identified “dedication to the newspaper” as the highest ranked leadership competency, skill, or behavior that separates a great college newsroom leader from an average college newsroom leader. The panel’s ranking of this item is consistent with its highest ranked items in replies to other questions including, “experiences that

helped shape their understanding of the role” of editor in chief and “leadership behaviors most important to the execution of the role of editor in chief.” The ranking of those items in multiple categories indicates there is agreement that the role requires a high degree of dedication to meet the time commitment, frustration, and amount of responsibilities associated with the role.

19. Leadership practices that panelists emulated when they became a top newsroom leader were those practices that demonstrated competence, showed ability to inspire, offered encouragement, showed value for each staff member as an individual, showed value for the staff’s input, showed ability to build a team, showed dedication to the newspaper, practices that communicated a vision, practices that fostered a learning environment, showed creativity, and showed determination.
20. Panelists emphasize the importance of leadership practices that demonstrate competence. An important competence is understanding the position as one that requires enormous responsibility and commitment that requires preparation. It also requires a wide range of competencies, skills, and behaviors, such as communicating, showing confidence, leading by example, demonstrating maturity, modeling a professional demeanor, demonstrating proactive behavior, and the ability to establish relationships.
21. Panelists regard an editor’s ability to model his or her love and commitment to journalism as an important practice in inspiring staff members to produce a quality paper. Panelists inspired their staff’s by showing passion and enthusiasm for the job. This practice inspired the staff to take their work seriously. Kouzes and Posner (1997) state leaders must inspire people by acting as “cheerleaders” who encourage people to “sign up for the duration.”
22. Balancing school and newspaper responsibilities was identified as a critical behavior for the success of college newsroom leaders and their staffs. This ability to balance school, jobs, and newspaper responsibilities has been identified as one of the most critical issues leaders face and helps define the unique culture of the college newsroom. Panelists considered their ability to model that behavior as an important practice.



23. Panelists regard a leader's ability to offer daily encouragement to the staff as a critical leadership practice for college editors. They cite encouragement as a critical practice in a mostly volunteer organization where it is important for people to understand their significance to the newspaper and the significance of their individual contributions. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state that "leadership provides appropriate and on-going recognition" (p.31). Kouzes and Posner (1995) report that "when non-managers are polled regarding the skills their managers need in order to be more effective, at the top of the list is the ability to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of others" (p. 270).
24. Panelists cited examples of practicing the art of "active listening" as an important leadership skill. Geisler (2000) states that "active listening" and "listening with empathy" are hallmarks of effective leadership. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state "The mastery of communication and empathy is inseparable from effective leadership" (p. 102).
25. Panelists consider teambuilding practices critical to the top newsroom leader's success. This is consistent with the characteristics they admired in previous newsroom leaders. They place the majority of teambuilding responsibilities with the editor in chief.
26. Panelists indicate that dedication to the newspaper is a practice they admired in previous leaders and tried to model. This is consistent with the characteristics they admired in previous newsroom leaders. They describe the leaders' efforts to ensure the publication's growth and development as a reflection of dedication. They describe editors who worked to improve the publication and want to see the paper and its staff members succeed as "inspiring." Panelists identified "dedication to the newspaper" as the highest ranked leadership behavior that separates a great college newsroom leader from an average college newsroom leader. This ranking is consistent with its highest ranked items in replies to other questions including, "experiences that helped shape their understanding of the role" of editor in chief and "leadership behaviors most important to the execution of the role of editor in chief."

Its ranking in multiple categories indicates there is agreement that the role requires a high degree of dedication to the newspaper.

27. Top editors should exercise a high level of hands-on involvement with the staff and production of the newspaper.
28. Panelists consider a positive learning environment critical to the development of the staff and success of the newspaper. They place the responsibility of fostering that learning environment with the editor in chief. Many of their practices demonstrate how they define and foster a learning environment. They endeavor to pass along important skills to new and veteran staff members who aspire to become better journalists and leaders. Panelists described using their newly learned skills to train at workshops at the beginning of each semester to help new staff members sharpen their skills. They also report teaching skills to their staffs by delegating responsibilities and by sending out e-mails listing advice on how to improve. One panelist offered advice on preparing new staff members for future leadership positions by starting their freshman year to develop their leadership skills. Panelists indicate peer teaching plays an important role in the practice of fostering a learning environment. Harvey (2002) emphasizes peer teaching or “students teaching students” as an important aspect of newsroom leadership.
29. The leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors identified as critical for college newsroom leaders were identical or equivalent to 90 percent of those identified by Kouzes and Posner’s (1995) list of 20 admired characteristics for all leaders. While the characteristics in the panel’s list are not ranked in the same order of importance as they are in Kouzes and Posner’s list, panelists none-the-less considered them important to the top newsroom leadership role.
30. There is agreement that the four top-ranked leadership characteristics—honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent—are ranked among the top four characteristics for all leaders and for college newsroom leaders. Kouzes and Posner’s (1995) research consistently shows the four most important values or characteristics for all leaders as honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent.

31. Panelists did not identify the traits “ambitious” and “independent,” which appear on Kouzes and Posner’s list of 20 admired characteristics for all leaders, as important to the role of top college newsroom leader. There were no responses from panelists that were similar or equivalent to “independent.” The responses throughout the study related to “ambitious” were identified as failings or significant shortfalls among college newspaper editors.
32. The panel named two behaviors and four competencies that do not have equivalent characteristics to the Kouzes and Posner (1995) list for all leaders. The panel included “consistent” and “decisive” as behaviors critical to the role of editor in chief. They included “ability to identify the newspaper’s strengths and weaknesses,” “ability to learn from and admit mistakes,” “ability to gain your fellow worker’s respect,” and “expects results from staff” as critical competencies. These characteristics may be more specific to the college newsroom’s unique arena. Heilbrunn (1996) emphasizes that leaders operate in a variety of arenas and that “successful captaincy... does not necessarily transfer to other fields” (p. 8). Panelists indicated that dealing with situations unique to that role requires multiple leadership competencies.
33. The panelists’ practices exemplified those practices that Kouzes and Posner (1995) call the five fundamental practices that “serve as the basis for helping leaders develop” (p. 11) and “enable leaders to get extraordinary things done” (p. 9). Those five practices are: challenging the process, encouraging the heart, modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and enabling others to act. Panelists describe these fundamental practices as helping them bring about change, realize goals, encourage and inspire others, become stronger role models, and recognize accomplishments of the staff.
34. Panelists’ agree that eight of the traits identified as ideal for professional newspaper editors (Peters, 2001) are also important to the college newspaper editors’ role. This list includes five of the six highest ranked characteristics in Peters’ list of ideal traits of top newsroom leaders indicating there is agreement concerning top ranked characteristics. While these characteristics are not ranked in the same order of

- importance in the panel's list as they are in Peters' list, they are none-the-less considered important to the top college newsroom leadership role.
35. Panelists did not identify equivalent or similar characteristics for seven of the 15 on Peters' list. These seven include hiring and promoting wisely, people-oriented approach to policies, ensuring fair/competitive salaries, balancing profit and demands/news values, delivers fair discipline, and communicates news values outward. Some traits such as balancing profit demands and news values, and ensuring fair/competitive salaries have far less relevance in the college newsroom.
  36. A lack of communication with staff has been identified by Peters (2001) as among the most significant shortfalls of top professional newspaper editors. In this study, panelists also identified inability to communicate with staff as one of the most significant shortfalls of top college newspaper editors. Solving this problem concerning "too little contact and communication" identified at both the college and professional newsroom level, should be a top priority in both arenas. Addressing this problem in the college newsroom could have a significant impact when these students move to the professional newsroom.
  37. College newsroom leaders indicated they placed a high value on the competencies, skills, and behaviors experts say are specific to effective leadership and described those characteristics as critical to their success. Less than half the panelists indicated they received formal leadership training (course, seminar, or workshop) as part of the preparation for the top newsroom leadership role.
  38. Panelists who reported receiving prior training described single, one-time seminars or workshops that were not specific to leadership. Conger (1992) states that "a single, one time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change" (p.192).
  39. Only 39 percent of panelists reported receiving leadership training during their tenure. There is no evidence that there is a structure in place sufficient to reinforce prior leadership training. Experts emphasize that leadership development requires reflection, understanding, and practice along with frequent reinforcement (Bennis, 1994).

40. Panelists' indicate both advisers and college newsroom leaders have their own unique role in helping to develop future newsroom leaders. Seventy-three percent of panelists indicated they looked to the adviser as a valuable resource and for guidance and encouragement. Other qualities displayed by their advisers as positive influences on their ability to lead included holding "high standards," being a "moral guide," and having a high level of "dedication to the newspaper." However, when attempting to develop their own leadership style, they looked to their experiences with previous editors. While advisers offer continuous encouragement and guidance, former leaders, both good and bad, have an impact on the leadership style and development of those who succeed them. Editors who had the greatest impact on their ability to lead were those who communicated high expectations and inspired followers to become committed to the shared vision of the organization, behavior described by Bass and Avolio (1994) as inspirational motivation. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that "It's not enough for the leader to have a dream about the future. A leader must be able to communicate the vision in ways that encourage us to sign on for the duration" (p. 24). In describing his peer development program designed to train beginning editors to be leaders, managers, teachers, and mentors, Harvey (2002) states "While advisers are nurturing authority figures, it is the students who ultimately must provide leadership" (p. 10).
41. More than half the panelists indicated they would seek formal training (course, seminar or workshop) if they accepted another leadership position. Their replies indicate they realize the complex nature of leadership and they recognize the need to maintain current skills as well as to learn new skills. Despite the value they place on developing leadership skills while on the job, they recognize that formal leadership training can help to provide them with a more comprehensive set of leadership skills and that training was a valuable supplement to their leadership development.
42. Panelists indicate they understand the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors that define the role of college newsroom leader within that unique arena. They stated that if faced with accepting a leadership role in a different arena, they would seek training specific to that arena. Several panelists described the reasons for seeking

further leadership training including the opportunity to review leadership principles, the opportunity to address leadership challenges of the new role and gain reassurance that the way they intend to proceed is correct for that arena.

43. Panelists who indicated they would not seek formal training emphasized the importance they placed on the “hands on” training they received on-the-job. They describe this experience as the way to gain the leadership expertise sufficient to be successful in that role. They regard formal training as more “motivational than educational” because “weekend-long programs” are insufficient to teach leadership skills. Conger (1992) states that “A single, one-time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change” (p. 192).
44. Panelists who would not seek formal training indicated do not see leadership courses, seminars, or workshops as relevant to their leadership development and question whether leadership skills can be taught through formal training. Instead, they see their experience as editor in chief as the best training for future leadership roles. They emphasize that no amount of training makes up for hands-on experience, especially in regard to the value of learning from mistakes. Bennis (1994) states that “failure and mistakes are major sources of vital experience...there can be no growth without risks and no progress without mistakes” (p.185). However, he also emphasizes “the need for education, both formal and informal”(p. 9).
45. In spite of the already large number of responsibilities that make the top newsroom editor’s job a daunting task, the panel considers the training of their successors, one of the editor’s key roles.
46. Panelists suggested several ways to transfer information from the outgoing editor in chief to the incoming editor in chief. They suggest that the editor in chief keep a journal of his or her experiences to give to the incoming editor so they can “learn from another’s experience.” They suggested outgoing editors develop a plan that allows the new leader to transition into the role while they are still there to offer guidance and can best facilitate the transfer of skills and advice to the new editor.
47. Panelists also suggest the implementation of a mentor program that identifies potential leaders early in their college newspaper careers, and begins training them

for future leadership positions immediately. Harvey (2002) developed “a training program for first-time editors at independent student newspapers to give them the necessary tools to become better teachers and newsroom leaders among their peers” (p. 5). Harvey’s (2002) study offers a scholarly approach in the development of leadership training curriculum that is informed by research. The training curriculum is the result of two years of research and is taught in a way the students say is most effective.

48. Panelists recommend sending incoming editors in chief to seminars where they have the opportunity to meet other students in their same positions and can establish contacts. These people can serve as peer advisers who can be contacted for advice and encouragement through e-mail or by telephone.
49. Some panelists suggested seminars, workshops, conferences, or courses as effective ways to help train incoming editors, especially those organized and presented by each newspaper that were specific to that newspaper’s leadership needs and unique situations. This suggests that even after the competencies, skills, and behaviors have been established for effective college newsroom leadership, that it may be necessary to further customize seminars to better meet the needs of individual newsrooms. Panelists also suggest that regular seminars or workshops are valuable because they can help incoming or perspective leadership candidates to better understand the various aspects of the role. They describe attending national conferences as a way to help “re-energize” editors and offer them “fresh perspectives” rather than a way to help them develop leadership skills.
50. Panelists recommend training for incoming editors emphasize the responsibilities associated with the top leadership position to prevent the new editor from encountering unnecessary surprises.
51. Newspaper advisers were identified most frequently as the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success during their tenure as editor in chief. Panelists explained this relationship as the only long-term continuity on the college newspaper; a steadying influence; an important source of feedback on progress and

advice on how to improve skills. This observation reflects the traditional adviser/student relationship where the adviser is an important source of constructive feedback for developing leaders.

52. Constructive feedback from the advisers, staff members, editorial boards, or others with leadership experience was cited as an important way for editors to evaluate their leadership performance and develop as leaders. Conger, Spreitzer, and Lawler (1999) state that “leaders learn from those at lower levels of the organization about the skills and competencies needed by the leader and by the organization for the change to become a reality” (p. 350). Constructive feedback was emphasized as a step in helping new leaders address their weaknesses and as a tool for reaffirming their strengths. Self-reflection was also cited as an important feedback tool for emerging leaders trying to develop leadership skills. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) state that “self-reflection is the first key to becoming a leader” (p. 70). Keeping a journal is one way they recommend developing leaders can reflect upon and monitor both successes and failures. The second step to becoming a leader according to Bennis and Goldsmith, is “interaction with others who tell us about ourselves.” This includes ‘reflective backtalk’ from colleagues.
53. Learning exclusively through on-the-job experience was not a training method most panelists advocated.
54. Helping college editors develop the necessary skills to be successful in their jobs continues to be important to students and their newspaper advisers. The list of competencies is extensive and includes journalism, management, and leadership skills. In an ideal world, the training of student journalists for leadership positions would begin their freshman year. By the time the student was selected for the top leadership role they would, at least in theory, have the knowledge and experience to succeed in that role. However, many college newspaper editors enter the role with limited experience and often no leadership training.



### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered for consideration, including recommendations for the application of the results of this study and for further research.

1. The results of this study should be made available to college newspaper editors and advisers to give them better insight into the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college editors identified in this study as critical to their success.
2. College newspaper editors should also be made aware of how the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors identified by experienced editors for college newspapers compare to the admired traits and practices identified for all leaders by Kouzes and Posner (1995) and to the ideal traits of professional newspaper editors by Peters (2001).
3. The leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college editors identified in this study as critical to their success should be used to better inform the curriculum of leadership courses, seminars, and workshops for college newspaper editors.
4. Seminars and workshops for college newspaper editors that are designed to teach leadership practices should discuss the differences in management and leadership and emphasize the leadership practices panelists identified in this study as important to the role of top newsroom leader.
5. The content for leadership courses, seminars, or workshops designed for college newspaper editors should be informed by scholarly research that is specific to that position and its unique arena. Instruction should be based on concepts informed by research and not on anecdotal advice or the popular press. Harris and DeSimone (1994) state that one of the problems with advice in the popular press is that it is usually anecdotal, lacks a sound theoretical basis, and is often contradictory (p. 396).
6. More research should be undertaken specific to college newspaper editors and the unique arena in which they work in order to advance the understanding of that role and establish a greater body of knowledge that addresses their leadership needs.

Born (1996) emphasizes that leadership programs need better scholarship and higher standards, rather than on-the-job training. He states:

Precisely in an age when high level critical thinking and academic skills are more important than ever for directing tasks, planning strategically, achieving, and, yes, even leading, the rhetoric of experimental “hands-on” education, so crucial in the leadership oeuvre, corrodes that understanding. (p. 48)

Panelists indicated they agreed with leadership experts that on-the-job experience was valuable, but learning exclusively through on-the-job training was not a training method most panelists advocated. Bennis (1994) advocates “the need for [leadership] education, both formal and informal” (p. 9).

7. Leadership seminars and workshops for college newspaper editors should be designed to address the challenges experienced college newspaper editors identify as unique to that role (as opposed to that of professional newspapers) and the competencies, skills, and behaviors they identify as important to meeting those challenges. While it is important for students preparing to take jobs in the professional newsroom to know and understand the skills critical to the professional newsroom, it is equally important for them to understand the skills that will help them to succeed in the college newsroom arena. A negative experience at the college newsroom level could have an impact on a college newspaper editor’s decision to pursue journalism as a career after graduation or to accept future offers of leadership positions in any field.
8. Future studies should concentrate on the best and most effective ways to develop and teach the competencies, skills, and behaviors identified in this study given the limited time students have to learn to lead within the college newsroom setting. For college newspaper editors to have the best experience possible, it is critical for them to have knowledge and experience that is specific to that role. College newspaper editors time in the top leadership role is short, making it more difficult for them to learn from mistakes, put what they have learned into practice, and actually see the results. Experts emphasize that leadership development requires reflection, understanding, and practice along with frequent reinforcement (Bennis, 1994). He states that

“leaders learn by doing” (p. 145). Student newsroom leaders have only a limited time to learn the leadership skills necessary for that role.

9. A computer-mediated Delphi study should be conducted to identify the leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors experienced college newspaper advisers deem most critical to college newspaper editors. This approach would help facilitate a study of a geographically dispersed group. The knowledge advisers have from their combined years of experience would serve to advance the body of knowledge from the unique perspective of those who often have the greatest opportunity to observe the leadership behaviors of editors over the longest period of time. Their observations are critical to a comprehensive, informed view of the top college newsroom leadership position. Students often turn to advisers for advice on a daily basis. Advisers are often “socialized” leaders who have gained their knowledge from experience. As a result, their advice or knowledge is often labeled “anecdotal.” Panelists in this study place a high value on the advisers’ input and look to them as valuable resources. Studies of the wealth of knowledge and experience advisers’ possess deserves scholarly research.
10. Computer conferencing should be employed as a means of encouraging top newsroom leaders to exchange ideas and offer one another encouragement and advice. Panelists in this study valued relationships they forged with student journalists at national conventions. These student newsroom leaders later became peer advisers when they corresponded through e-mail and by telephone seeking and giving advice on leadership issues.
11. College newspaper editors should be encouraged to chronicle their leadership experiences to pass along to incoming editors. Panelists in this study recommended the editor in chief or managing editor keep a journal for the express purpose of enlightening the new editor about the challenges of the job and practices they employed to meet those challenges. This is especially helpful when reporters with no previous newsroom leadership experience are drafted for the top newsroom leadership position.

12. Mentoring relationships between the incoming editor in chief and the outgoing editor in chief should be fostered to help facilitate the transfer of knowledge. Top newsroom editors should be encouraged to mentor those who have been identified as potential leaders.
13. State and national organizations that offer leadership sessions or seminars for college newsroom leaders during conventions or as week-long workshops, limit the content to research that addresses the needs of college newsroom leaders. College newspaper editors often have little time or opportunity for formal leadership training making it critical that training seminars or workshops have a clearly defined purpose that focuses on the most critical aspects of the job.
14. Hour-long leadership workshops and seminars at national and state conventions are not effective ways to teach leadership skills to incoming editors. They lack the adequate leadership content, concentration on significant leadership skills and competencies, and necessary follow-up opportunities to make them effective in meeting the leadership needs of college newsroom leaders. At best, they serve to motivate or re-energize college newsroom leaders, offer them a fresh perspective, and the opportunity to make contacts with their counterparts at other colleges or universities.
15. Week-long workshops, as currently designed, are not effective because they are limited in time and the range of topics is far too broad to allow any seminar or workshop to be effective. Conger (1992) states that “A single, one-time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change” (p. 192).
16. A follow-up study should be undertaken to confirm the results of this study using a larger sample of the population of college newspaper editors.
17. A committee of college newspaper advisers, experienced college newspaper editors, and other stakeholders should be created to address the leadership challenges facing college newspaper newsrooms in the same manner and with the same urgency as the American Society of Newspaper Editors addressed the leadership challenges facing the professional newspaper industry. ASNE President Rich Oppel created a Leadership Committee to focus on leadership issues. A report of their findings from

an ASNE Leadership Conference in 2000 and the results of research on the state of leadership in America's newsrooms was published in an ASNE Report (2000-2001). Like the ASNE Leadership Committee, a college newspaper leadership committee should seek funding from foundations and collaboration with media organizations to fund research and a conference to bring decision-makers and stakeholders together to address the issue of leadership in college newsrooms.

18. College newspaper editors should be made aware of the leadership practices experienced editors admired in previous leaders and emulated when they became editors in chief.
19. In light of the high motivation shown by panelists in this study to participate in research that addresses student newsroom leadership, additional computer-mediated studies should be done to further explore that issue. Based on the high level of participation in this study and the low attrition rate, computer mediated studies appear to be well-suited to college students who are comfortable using Web-based technology.
20. A study should be done to determine the best ways for college newspaper advisers and editors in top college newspaper leadership positions throughout the United States to share knowledge on a regular basis concerning the development of leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors of college newspaper editors. For example, the use of Web-based technology allowed geographically dispersed editors to participate in this study.
21. College media organizations at both the state and national levels should endeavor to create a data base specific to student newsroom leadership that could be accessed by college newspaper editors who are attempting to expand their knowledge of leadership specific to their roles.
22. College media organizations at both the state and national levels should not only base the curriculum for leadership workshops and seminars on research that is specific to college newspaper editors, but also develop follow-up opportunities for reinforcing that content.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**E-MAIL TO ADVISORS**

Date:

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to seek your help as a fellow college newspaper adviser. I am assembling an expert panel of college newspaper editors for research I am developing both in my capacity as a college newspaper adviser and as a doctoral candidate in Educational Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University.

Your experience as an adviser makes you the best qualified to nominate students to participate in a study that will ask experienced college newspaper editors to help identify the leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs they designate as critical for effective newsroom leadership. There are studies that identify these competencies for all professional leaders and for professional journalists, as well as surveys that identify what students preparing for the role of editor in chief say they think is important to that leadership role. However, there is little follow-up research that seeks input from students who are currently in that role, or have recently completed that role. Nor is there research to determine if the leadership training some of these students received actually addressed their most significant needs.

The goal of the study is to provide incoming college newsroom editors with leadership information deemed most valuable by their experienced peers. This information base can then be used by decision-makers that design leadership curriculum for courses, workshops, and seminars, to help better meet the most critical training needs of college newspaper editors.

I am using the Delphi method, which utilizes a panel of experts to elicit individual judgements or opinions from each member concerning a specific problem under investigation; in this case, student-identified leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs for effective newsroom leadership. The expert panel will be experienced college newspaper editors, who will be asked to respond to questionnaires over a period of three months. The study will be conducted using Internet and Web-based applications. Computerized conferencing is well-suited to this body of experts because of their familiarity and comfort using electronic communication. It also allows for participation from a geographically dispersed group.

Eligible candidates will be those students who have served in the role of editor in chief for more than three months or have been out of the role for no more than one year. If possible, I need you to identify two or more people who fit these qualifications and would be motivated to participate in the study. Although they are all busy students, they will hopefully welcome the opportunity to have input in a study that focuses on their leadership concerns. Please include with your nominations, the student's name, address/e-mail address and telephone number and send them to Alice Rowlands ([arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)). In order to keep the study on schedule, I need your nominations by October 15, 2003.

Thank you for your help in identifying potential participants and for your support for this research. If you have any questions please contact me at 281-649-3000 X2247 or 281-859-4620.

Alice J. Rowlands  
Associate Professor in Mass Media/Collegian Adviser  
Houston Baptist University  
281-859-4620  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

Date:  
From: Alice J. Rowlands  
To: Nominee  
Subject: Request participation in a study on student identified leadership competencies, skills, behaviors, and training needs.

Dear Editor:

You have been nominated by your student newspaper adviser to participate in a study I am conducting concerning newsroom leadership. Your experience as an editor in chief qualifies you to participate as an expert panelist in a Delphi study that seeks to identify the leadership competencies, skills and behaviors critical for effective student newsroom leadership. Panelists are student editors with first-hand knowledge of that leadership position, making them uniquely qualified to discuss that role.

The purpose of this study is to discover if there is agreement among editors of college newspapers about the most valuable or critical leadership characteristics needed for that role and to discover the training they think is needed to help develop or strengthen these leadership characteristics or skills. I am undertaking this project both in my capacity as a college student newspaper adviser and as a doctoral candidate in Educational Human Resource Development at Texas A& M University.

Identifying the leadership and training needs of editors will help those who structure student leadership seminars and design leadership curriculum to have a better understanding of the leadership and training needs student editors think are most critical to their success.

This computer-based Delphi study allows a group of experts with unique knowledge of a specific situation to gain insight into the problem under study; allows for equal participation of panel members without the interference of domineering group members or group bias; allows participation of student editors across a wide geographic area; is well-suited to computerized conferencing; and guarantees anonymity to the participants.

As a member of the Delphi panel of experts, you will be asked to respond to four rounds of questions, each taking approximately one hour of your time.

Round 1: Essentially a brainstorming session, the format uses open-ended questions to elicit individual judgements or opinions from each panel member. In addition, a questionnaire will ask panelists to rank order leadership characteristics identified in previous studies of professional leaders.

Round 2: After all panelists have replied to the Round 1 questions, responses will be compiled, summarized and returned for your feedback in Round 2. You will receive panel comments, rankings of individual questionnaire items, and be asked for your input and to again rank items.

Round 3: The goal of Round 3 and any subsequent rounds is to achieve consensus or agreement among panelists.

As a college newsroom leader, your participation is critical to this study. There is little research that deals with the most critical leadership characteristics as well as training needed to succeed as a college newsroom leader. Please e-mail your response to me by October XX, 2003. Once panelists are confirmed, I will disseminate a packet of introductory information and the study will begin. As a former college newspaper editor, I understand the demands on your time and I appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Alice J. Rowlands  
Associate Professor in Mass Media and Collegian Adviser  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)  
281-649-3000 X2247  
281-859-4620



**APPENDIX B****NOMINATION E-MAIL TO PROSPECTIVE PANELISTS**



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu)

Dear {Participant's name},

You have been nominated by your college student newspaper adviser, {editor's name} to participate in a study I am conducting concerning newsroom leadership. Your experience as a current or previous editor in chief or managing editor qualifies you to participate as an expert panelist in a Delphi study that seeks to identify the leadership competencies, skills and behaviors critical for effective student newsroom leadership. Panelists are student editors with first-hand knowledge of that leadership position, making them uniquely qualified to discuss that role.

The purpose of this study is to discover if there is agreement among editors of college newspapers about the most valuable or critical leadership characteristics needed for that role and to discover the training they think is needed to help develop or strengthen these leadership characteristics or skills. I am undertaking this project both in my capacity as a college student newspaper adviser and as a doctoral candidate in Educational Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University .

This computer-based Delphi study, conducted through Texas A&M's Center for Distance Learning Research, allows a group of experts with unique knowledge of a specific situation to gain insight into the problem under study; allows for equal participation of panel members without the interference of domineering group members or group bias; allows participation of student editors across a wide geographic area; is well-suited to computerized conferencing; and guarantees anonymity to the participants.

As a member of the Delphi panel of experts, you will be asked to respond to four rounds of questions, each taking approximately 30 minutes or less of your time.  
**This information round should only take 5 minutes.**

Round 1: Essentially a brainstorming session, the format uses open-ended questions to elicit individual judgements or opinions from each panel member.

Round 2: After all panelists have replied to the Round 1 questions, responses will be compiled, summarized and returned for your feedback in Round 2.

Round 3: The goal of Round 3 and any subsequent rounds is to achieve consensus or agreement among panelists about the most critical competencies for top leadership roles in college newsrooms. This round will also include survey questions specific to your leadership experience, leadership training, and your recommendations on how best to prepare future college newsroom leaders.

Your participation is critical to this study. There is little research that deals with the most critical leadership characteristics as well as training needed to succeed as a college newsroom leader. Please respond by November 30.

To proceed, please [click here](#)

If you have any questions regarding this information please email the webmaster at [jantony@cdlr.tamu.edu](mailto:jantony@cdlr.tamu.edu)

Thank you,

Alice

**APPENDIX C**  
**REQUEST FOR DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu)

## Information Sheet

I understand that I will participate in a research study that is in partial fulfillment of a doctoral dissertation on student leadership. The purpose of the study is to ask my help, as an experienced college newsroom leader, in identifying the competencies, skills, and behaviors I designate as critical for effective student newsroom leadership. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of my participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the records, or destroyed.

Please read the following points:

1. I understand the aim of the study is to provide incoming college newsroom editors with leadership information deemed most valuable by their experienced peers. This information base can then be utilized by decision makers who design leadership courses, workshops, and seminars, to better meet leadership training needs of college newspaper editors.
2. I understand that I am one of forty participants from colleges and universities across the United States who were nominated by his or her college newspaper adviser to participate.
3. I understand that the study will be conducted using computerized conferencing, that I will be asked to answer several rounds of questions until the group reaches consensus.
4. I understand that The Delphi technique was selected to structure this group process because it allows participants to participate equally, allows participation of student editors across a wide geographic area, is well-suited to computerized conferencing, and guarantees anonymity to the participants.
5. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, either now or during the course of the project. If requested, I can receive a report of the findings of the study.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University . For research-related problems

or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Richard E. Miller, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, at (979) 845-1811.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlr.tamu.edu)

## Information

Hit the **"SEND"** button at the bottom of this page when done.

First Name	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Title	<input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>
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Major	<input type="text"/>
Minor	<input type="text"/>
College/University attended	<input type="text"/>
Name of college/university's newspaper	<input type="text"/>
Frequency of publication	<input type="text"/>

Years of experience working for the newspaper	<input type="text"/> years
Name the college newspaper positions you held before assuming the role of editor-in-chief/managing editor	<input type="text"/>
Please describe your roles and/or responsibilities as editor-in-chief/managing editor	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many people were on staff when you were editor-in-chief/managing editor	<input type="text"/> people
Please give the dates of the time you served	<input type="text"/>
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E-mail	<input type="text"/>
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<div><input type="button" value=":: SEND ::"/> <input type="button" value=":: RESET ::"/></div>	



**APPENDIX D**  
**ROUND ONE QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

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Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlr.tamu.edu)

Dear {Participant's name},

Thank you for agreeing to participate as an expert panelist in the study to identify leadership competencies, skills, behaviors and training needs of college newspaper editors. This research is dependent upon your replies. I am grateful for your participation.

Please reply by **December 7, 2003**.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUND ONE**

This constitutes Round One of the study. This round will be conducted entirely online.

To proceed, please [click here](#)

If you have any questions regarding this information please email the webmaster at [jantony@cdlr.tamu.edu](mailto:jantony@cdlr.tamu.edu)

Thank you,

Alice



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu)

## Round One

In Round One, I need your help in identifying two sets of criteria. The first are basic journalism competencies. The second deals with leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors you relied on or most needed in your current or previous role of editor in chief or managing editor. The following **13** questions are open-ended. Include as much information as you deem necessary to clarify and expand your points.

Please answer these questions and hit the "SEND" button when done.

1. As a rule, what **basic journalism** competencies should an incoming editor in chief or managing editor have?

**Experts tell us there is a big difference in management and leadership. Please read the following definitions before answering questions 2-13.**

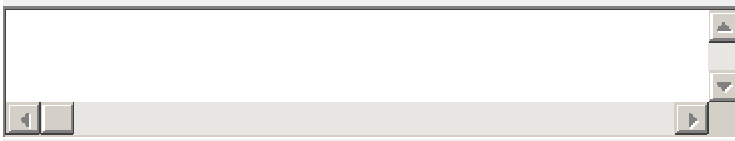
### Management

Management responsibilities are a large part of most leaders' job descriptions. Northouse (2001) explains that the overriding function of management is to provide order and consistency to organizations. Kotter (1990) states that management is about budgeting, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving.

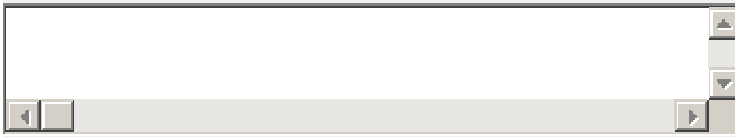
### Leadership

Northouse (2001) explains the primary function of leadership is to produce change and movement. Kotter (1990) states that leadership is about building a vision, aligning people, communicating, motivating, inspiring, and recognizing accomplishments.

2. Were you aware or were you made aware of the differences in management and leadership before you became editor in chief or managing editor?



3. How important is that distinction (in question 2) to a college newsroom leader?



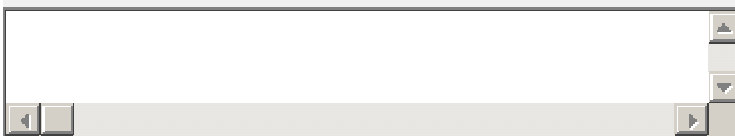
4. Before becoming editor in chief or managing editor, what leadership competencies did you most admire in student newsroom leaders?



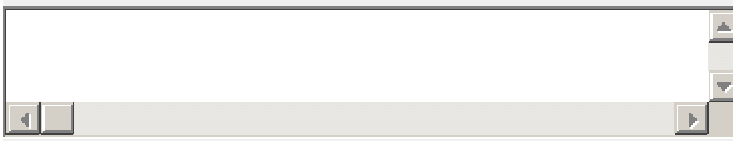
5. Give examples of ways you tried to emulate the leadership competencies you most admired in newsroom leaders when you became editor in chief or managing editor.



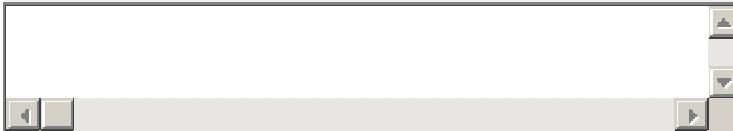
6. In your expert opinion, what leadership competencies, skills, behaviors do you think are most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief?  
List as many as you like.



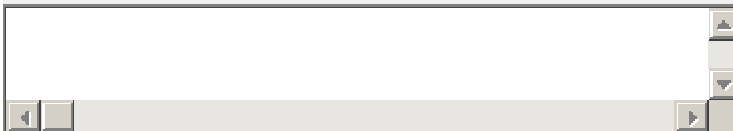
7. What leadership competencies do you lack that you think would have helped you be a more effective leader?



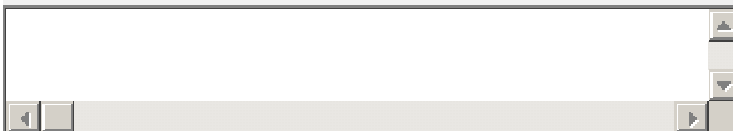
8. Before entering the role, what was your biggest misconception about the leadership role of editor in chief or managing editor?



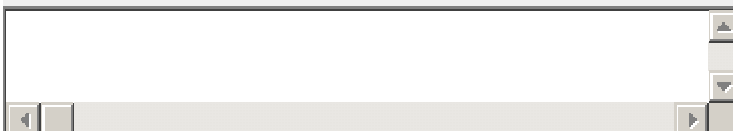
9. How has the experience of being a college newspaper editor shaped your understanding of the editor in chief leadership position?



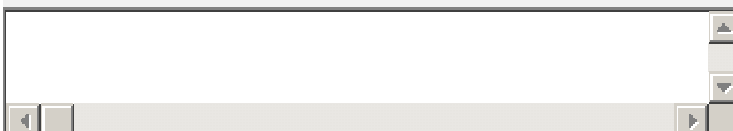
10. Do you think there are any leadership competencies that are unique to being a college editor in chief (as opposed to professional leadership roles)?



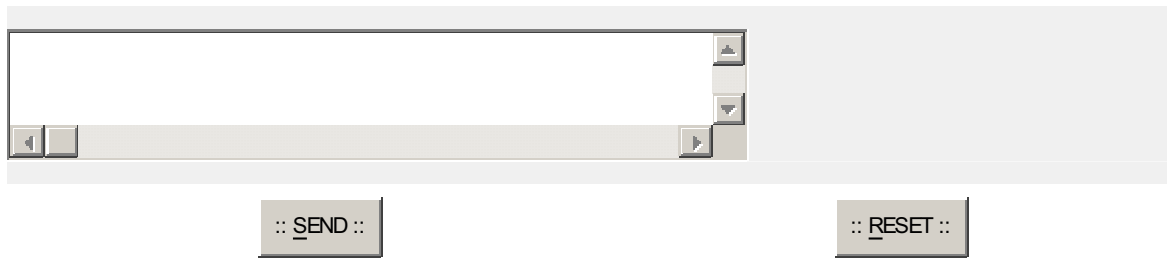
11. What separates an average student newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader?



12. What do you regard as the most significant shortfall in leadership among most college newspaper editors?



13. Specific to the subject of student newsroom leadership, what would you like to add that you think would advance the understanding of that role?



The image shows a web form interface. At the top, there is a light gray rectangular area. Inside this area, on the left, is a text input field with a thin black border. To the right of the input field is a vertical stack of three small square buttons: a top button with an upward arrow, a middle button with a downward arrow, and a bottom button with a rightward arrow. Below the input field and these buttons is a horizontal bar with a left arrow button on the left and a right arrow button on the right. Below this horizontal bar are two buttons: a button on the left labeled "SEND" and a button on the right labeled "RESET". Both buttons have a light gray background and a thin black border.

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**APPENDIX E**  
**RESPONSES TO ROUND ONE QUESTIONS**

### Responses to Round One

1. As a rule, what **basic journalism** competencies should an incoming editor in chief or managing editor have?

Editing competency, well developed managerial and leadership skills, exemplary writing and reporting skills, AP knowledge

I firmly believe that an incoming editor in chief should have at least a year of experience in the newsroom they are going to lead and should have worked in several capacities. These jobs should include reporting and editing as a general rule. They should also include some sort of leadership role, as in a section editor position. This gives the person a chance to work with other sections and gain an understanding of how the world works on the other side of the fence - design, photography and graphics - and building packages that will make the newspaper stand out. Every editor needs to have at least a working knowledge of whatever desktop publishing program the newspaper employs and **MUST** know how to write a decent headline. After all, it's the editor who will have to fix things when they don't work.

An editor in chief's primary charge is setting a vision and direction for the newspaper. Consequently, he or she must understand journalism as a craft and calling. This understanding is nurtured and enriched through practice as well as theory but it is as much a function of instinct as it is experience.

Basic function in each step of the production process are important (ex. design, copy process, writing and original editing of the copy.)

A sense for news. The ability to find stories and know how to dig for one. Also, the ability to be firm and tough. Going easy on stories, being afraid to say something bad or something that makes a person look bad is a disservice to the readers. The editor needs to be able to have a sense of balance.

Incoming top editors at a newspaper should have several main areas of competency. First and foremost, the editors should be good journalism editors. They should be able to aid in the editing and copy editing of stories, and guide section editors as well as writers in their writing. They should also have good news sense and be able to work with editors and writers to improve the reporting in the paper as well. In addition, the top two editors should be able to work well with the business and advertising managers at the paper. This includes understanding of the advertising billing process at least a basic level. At small papers like college publications, it is important for someone to coordinate both the editorial and business activities of the paper. Whether those responsibilities are split between the editor in chief and the managing editor or done jointly, the editors need to be able to work well with people and make decisions when necessary in order to get things moving.

He or she should know the basics of reporting, some design and have good writing skills.

As a managing editor, I feel that the basic competencies that seemed most significant to my own role on a newspaper staff were: significant knowledge of AP style, as well as grammar; technical knowledge (i.e. QuarkXPress, Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop, basic computer troubleshooting skills, and a general knowledge of the printing process); and knowledge of layout and design, as well as some level of aesthetic comprehension. While this may seem less like journalism (from the angle of finding stories, covering important events, and so forth), my experience as a managing editor has always been more involved with the technical side of things, as well as staff management and administrative duties. It would seem that someone who is a



strong manager and leader, who understands publishing and design, could function as well or better than someone whose entire experience consists of journalism itself (the writing process, etc.), as long as such a person has a general understanding of journalism (from both the coverage and the writing angles) and the journalistic enterprise.

Sound news judgment, strong sense of the community's ideology, an editorial vision, clear understanding of the principles of news presentation and most importantly a devotion to ethics.

Upper management must have a strong grasp on ethics. A paper cannot be taken seriously if it appears sneaky, takes advantage of its sources or its readers intelligence. They must also be clear on the laws of their state as it concerns open meetings and what recourse can be taken when they are turned away from a meeting they have rights to report on. As it relates to editing, a good EIC or ME must have good story judgment and a familiarity with AP style. They must also have the courage to miss deadline when a breaking story requires them to hold the paper. Likewise, they must know when a non-story or a bad story has slipped past the editors and copy desk and must be pulled from the page. Upper management is responsible for reading/knowing about every story their paper prints. They must find a way to do this without impeding the publication process.

Certainly, an understanding of issues involving journalistic issues and standards is necessary. As the one who answers the proverbial angry phone calls, the editor in chief needs to know what is okay and have a reason to explain everything that goes in the paper. Also necessary is just an understanding of what makes a story complete and what makes people want to read a story. Without a vision of how the reporting will function, a newsroom could easily fall into a rut.

The basics of a news story – inverted pyramid, leads, where to find sources, what questions to ask Copy editing and layout skills AP style Knowledge of journalism law, especially libel What makes a good photo and graphic, and legal points concerning these images

He/she should have already taken several journalism courses in college and/or English courses. For someone to have this kind of position-it should be relegated to a person who is either a junior or senior in college. This way they will have taken most of the journalism classes as well as gotten experience either through working on the college paper or through an internship or part time job at a local newspaper. He/she should also be approachable, able to get along with others but yet able to lay the rules down as far as when it comes to deadlines. He/she should have probably had some experience already being a leader in a previous job in order to be able to manage a college paper that will either consist of 10 or more people on staff.

As far as basic journalism competencies, an incoming editor should have a very good understanding of fairness and accuracy. I think that these are the two main things when dealing with a University and members of your staff. I think that also a good background in writing and editing and also a sense to know when you are the editor of the paper versus when you are just a journalism student. There are a lot of things that go into being an editor and you cannot be prepared for them all. Having an understanding of what you were taught in classes and the knowledge that it is okay to ask questions is also important. On the other hand, some of the best journalists on my staff are not print journalism majors; this poses another issue when you are dealing with the do's and don'ts of basic journalism. Distinguishing between editorializing, personal opinion and just times when it is best to leave an issue when not enough information is at hand. A sense of news and what students want to read is important as well. I think a command of English, basic grammar, news writing

skills and journalistic integrity are the things that are most needed. You always have to expect the unexpected...that is what will always happen.

The incoming Editor-in-Chief should have sound knowledge of AP Style, media law (specifically the First Amendment), basic design (using the specific design program used at the paper) and very basic management skills as they apply to journalistic situations. That is, he or she should be able to act in a professional manner at all times and know how to handle situations as they arise in a calm and respectful manner. As Editor, one does not represent their interests, but the interests of the newspaper.

Where to start? There are so many journalistic skills a chief editor should possess. A forward and backward command of AP style is a must as well as an advanced knowledge of grammar. (I always feel superior when I catch an incorrect use of that/which.) I also think every staff member should know the style of the paper they work for. For example my newspaper capitalizes university when pertaining to our school. How to write a headline, inverted pyramid and a strong lead are also necessary.

Any senior editor, especially the editor in chief, should have mastered the art of news writing and also be skilled in argumentative and feature writing. For news writing, the important skills include writing leads and prioritizing facts. Of course, journalism competency includes ethics in reporting, making sure all sides of a story are told, fairness in quoting, etc. They need to be able to identify these issues in articles they read before they go to press.

The first basic rule I think would need to be experience. A person needs to get his or her feet wet first in order to know how to run a newsroom. They need to know every person they work with, know what each person's responsibilities are and know how to do each of those positions themselves. I also think the person going into this position should have at least 3 or four basic journalism classes prior to the position.

How to write a news stories, how to keep an unbiased opinion during current events, basic journalism rules (headline writing, page layout designs. etc.), computer skills, keyboarding, PageMaker (or whatever design program is used), some kind of Photoshop skills

The incoming editor or managing editor should have proved experience in working for a college or local newspaper/publication. Editors should have high ethical standards as proved through their work/personality. They should have a good knowledge of AP style and reporting/writing experience. Editors should be familiar with the interworkings of a college publication. While I think it is important that editors have some journalism background, I think more important than possessing those qualities is having the attitude to always strive to learn more about the profession to improve your work and the willingness to cooperate with others.

2. Were you aware or were you made aware of the differences in management and leadership before you became editor in chief or managing editor?

No

No. In fact, I'd say that journalism skills were the emphasis during that time period. Management and leadership training were the last item on our agendas. I should explain. Our newspaper holds a three-day editors' retreat in which we discuss management, leadership and our plans for the semester. Instead of meeting this goal, we focus on our plans. Management and leadership are touched on briefly and not discussed as separate items. The techniques and style of my leadership came from working in a professional newsroom prior to my work at my student newspaper and working with editors who didn't directly teach me how to lead but led by example. I was aware of how it worked in "the real world," but that world doesn't necessarily apply to working with and motivating a staff of students who aren't sure if journalism is their cup of tea. I would say that while I felt prepared to manage the newsroom, I wasn't prepared to manage the people in that newsroom.

Perhaps at the risk of oversimplifying the issue, I've found that good leaders are usually good managers but the converse is not always true.

NO. I was helped by an advisor to recognize that each of these aspects were important, but they were never specifically defined as "management" or "leadership."

Yes. I believe that leadership is getting people to follow an organized plan. I think management is more like being a boss, which constitutes giving orders and making rules. When it comes down to it, I think people would much rather follow a leader than deal with a boss. Leaders are likeable. That's important because you get more out of people and they are more willing to work for and with you if you are likeable.

I was never made explicitly aware of the differences between management and leadership before I became editor in chief. I can remember the questions during my job interview for the position touched on one or the other, but it was never distinctly discussed. When I was news editor last year though, I could see the editor in chief seemed to be more of a leader than a manager, although this stemmed greatly from the personality of our editor in chief at the time.

Yes

I was never made aware of this distinction; though I believe I was more or less aware of the differences in the two roles when I became managing editor. Or, rather, while I may not have differentiated the two terms with such definition, I understood that both of these facets of the position existed.

Having been in the Navy before my stint as editor, I was aware of the difference. But I did not have a full understanding of the distinction—and the importance of the later—until I was thrust into managing the daily operations of the newsroom.

I knew about the difference but never thought about it.

I think I always included leadership in my definition of good management.

Yes, I attended the Grady Management seminar in Athens, Ga. and attended sessions on the differences between management and leadership. There were also discussions within our media groups at school on the differences, and how to be both a good manager and good leader.

Yes. Management for the most part seemed to be on the back of the adviser as far as helping getting the newspaper together. Leadership would have to depend on the kind of editor that was hired.

Not at all. I always assumed that the two go hand in hand and that in the big picture they were the same. I learned about this just this past semester. I can be a leader...the basics, making change, having a vision, motivating my staff and encouraging them to do their best. I think the hardest thing to do is be a manager, providing that stability in the office and stability in my everyday life dealing with school, family and social aspects of everyday life. I guess in the back of my mind I knew that there was a difference, but it never came to the forefront. Things are so fast paced when you are put into the position of editor. I always feel that once I get 10 steps ahead, I fall 10 back because something happens where I have to reteach, redo or just go back to square one when things get tough and things seem to fall apart. I feel that this hinders on my being an effective leader because at these points in my job, I become unmotivated and just do not want to move toward that necessary change because it just never seems to be within reach. Largely, I think the two go hand in hand and I believe that I may have been aware of the difference, but was never told "hey...you have to be both a manager and a leader," at my office our advisor refers to us as a management team (editor, managing editor, photo editor, yearbook editor and advertising manager) but says we are leaders. I think to her (not picking on her mind you) she sees them as one, thus making me think it is one job.

Yes, I believe that I was aware of these two distinct roles. I was already a leader as identified by the leadership roles I had occupied prior to taking over as EIC. I became a manager when I took responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the newspaper. I focused on my communication skills as a leader, but my business skills as an editor. Suddenly, a budget, pay issues and staff training became my first priorities whereas before I was able to be creative and work to improve the pages of the newspaper by collaborating with others.

I'm not sure I know the difference now. But my editing experience may be unique.

Yes. On our paper especially, we have come to understand that in an editor in chief you need somebody who is a skilled manager and able to run a tight ship, but also someone who can inspire the staff to do their best work.

No, I just recently bought a book that explained the differences in detail.

Yes. I think of managers more as the class advisor. His/her job is to keep the class organized and watch out for chaos. The editor is the leader. Someone who directs the classes visions and the papers goals.

No. I became managing editor as a freshman so I was unaware of many things that I feel an editor should be aware of. However, over the last semester, I have seen how leadership and management must coexist for a staff to progress successfully.

### 3. How important is that distinction (in question 2) to a college newsroom leader?

Distinguishing between leadership and management is a skill that can only be learned by experience. Though developed leadership skills are preferred when choosing a newsroom leader, most college-aged editors haven't developed strong those skills by then. It is highly important, especially when working with peers, but a college newsroom leader job leaves room for learning and developing both of the skills.

The distinction is very important. Managing a newsroom and the journalistic practices within comes easily to someone who knows the business. Leading a group of people to do what you want them to do, however, is difficult. If the distinction is made clear from the beginning, a student editor will likely have a better understanding of his or her role in the newsroom.

This depends in large part on the size of one's staff. In our case — a relatively large staff — the editor's role is more about leadership: vision, motivation, inspiration, etc. However, an editor's ability to implement his or her vision is dependent on his management ability (or his ability to delegate management.) An editor in chief's success can perhaps be measured by his or her ability to translate the abstractions of leadership into practice.

I think the biggest difference between management and leadership can be signified by in the office or in the newsroom. It seems to me that a good manager is one who is sitting in an office planning. A leader, by these definitions, is one who is in the newsroom encouraging and communicating directly with the staff.

It's very important. In a college setting everyone being the same age is a real problem. It's hard for someone who is 20 to listen to another 20 year-old and do everything he or she says. It is especially hard when a 22-year-old has to take orders from a 19- or 20-year old. Being likeable and having a vision is important. People work better with someone their age they can relate to than with someone their age that comes down on them all the time. Being a leader is much more important than managing.

I think it depends on the situation at the paper. If there are no specific issues that need to be addressed, it is not as important a distinction, as long as the editor has a reasonable balance of both skills. A mix of leadership and good management can help a good paper become better. However, if there are specific problems, the distinction becomes more important. Last year, The Temple News needed a lot of change in the attitude of editors toward getting work done on time, and the paper was undergoing some major design changes. It took leadership more than management to move us to the point where we were getting everything in on time as well as to implement the changes that go along with conversion from tabloid to broadsheet format. At times, it seemed like the editor in chief moved us forward by sheer will (and screaming). This year however, because the pieces were in place, management has been needed more than in the past, because although the basics were there, a lot of small things needed to be adjusted and monitored in order to get the paper into good shape.

Very important distinction. You want a leader not a care-taker.

I don't feel that the distinction between the two is nearly as important as realizing that each of these aspects of the position of managing editor (or editor in chief) exist. Generally, they are never so obviously separate, in practice, as such a partition would suggest. One must be a manager -and- a leader, whether editor in chief or managing editor; distinguishing the two roles so blatantly would only suggest that one should only have one responsibility or the other.

Critical, especially given that student journalists are just that: both students and journalists. If a college editor fails to fulfill his role as a leader in the newsroom—constantly setting achievable goals and motivating the staff to reach them—the staff's energy will go toward classes and not the copy, editing and design. The result being a lifeless paper that is a joke in the community.

When dealing with positions like EIC or ME I always assumed that both were important and shouldn't be separated.

It's important to know when you're doing one and when you're doing the other. Both skills are necessary, but to think that you're being a good leader by, say, only making sure the operation runs smoothly would be misguided.

The distinction is not incredibly important, but the ability to both manage and lead is vital. As an editor, you are responsible for both the content of your paper – words, images, ads – and the people who work with you. You must be able to manage the office so things can operate effectively, but also lead the people to make the final product the best it can be.

Management is 110 percent important because without any sort of order on the newspaper-everything is thrown into disarray. Management should be completely on the back of the editor. The editor should be responsible for coordinating staff meetings with both writers/editors and photographers. Organize the storyboards for current and future issues. The editor is one person whom I would expect to be around the newsroom 5 or 7 days a week so they can be reached. If not, they can be reached at home. Or at least, the editor should make certain that if staff writers/photographers need help-they should have them contact their page editors of whom he/she is turning the story in for.

I think that a distinction is probably very important, but honestly, I never thought about it until the difference was pointed out. I think it may help with the stress level of the job. A lot of times I find myself wanting to be a role model for those on staff... but at the same time I cannot do the simple things like problem solving alone. I am always second guessing myself and using other high ranking staff members as a crutch when I cannot make a decision on my own. Sometimes it is also difficult because you end up becoming friends with those on staff, and it makes it hard to manage them when control or organization or punishment is in order. I think it is important to know when it is time to be a manager and when it is time to be a leader.

I don't think that the distinction is as important as the ability to balance the two. A leader needs to inspire just as a manager needs to get effective work out of the people managed. So, if a manager can play the role of both a manager and leader, it creates a positive work environment.

My perspective might be skewed. The University of St. Thomas is a small school; my staff consisted of six core staffers and five or six contributing writers. As editor I had to cover all the bases. I created the production schedule and the budget. I designed the layout and assigned the stories. I was the management and leadership. I don't think the paper would have been as successful had I not been able to fulfill both descriptions. So in my situation the distinction was not important.

I think at the bare minimum you need a skilled manager. Without order a paper just won't work. But only when you find someone with both skills will a newspaper advance, and as we begin choosing a new editor that is a factor we are most considering.

Very. Especially in college I think it's important to get people motivated to want to get involved. They don't know what benefits they will receive from doing the work and how rewarding it can be unless they are told and inspired by someone to do so.

It's very important. If the editor was not the leader, I think the staff would be unfulfilled and unsatisfied, lacking purpose.

It is even more important than in other situations outside a college campus. Student journalists need to be motivated, inspired and recognized for their accomplishments even more because in most situations they are not getting paid much or not getting paid at all. Student managers need to motivate their staffs in order to retain a good staff. However, aside from that, managers must take on their management roles to keep the publication operations running smoothly and control what sometimes may lead to an out of control situation when all employees are college students.



4. Before becoming editor in chief or managing editor, what leadership competencies did you most admire in student newsroom leaders?

My first editor didn't care much about the newspaper or the writers, so there wasn't much I admired or learned from her.

I didn't have a strong leader, but what I admired most about my predecessor was his ability to laugh when things were going wrong. Someone else usually fixed them, though.

Declining readership — especially among the college-age crowd — requires newspapers to pursue a status they have often the luxury of taking for granted: relevance. I've always been attracted to creativity and innovation when it is tempered with a respect for tradition and history.

The woman that served as editor in chief the first year that I joined the paper as a novice reporter always treated everyone respectfully and as an equal—from our front office clerks to the managing editor. She remembered names, and would refer to me with personal information about recent copy I'd written, and always by my name.

Listening skills. People have ideas all the time. Some of them are good, some of them not so good, others bad. But if the editor listens to them, it makes people feel like they have a say, like they are making a contribution. Reporters realize that they have to take smaller assigned stories, but when they get to go out and work on their own stories, it gives them a sense of pride in their work. If an editor is listening to ideas the paper will become better. One person's ideas get bland and tiresome. If more people's ideas are being used, it gives the paper a sense of liveliness.

Ability to motivate people, being able to earn both friendship and respect of other staffers, strong leadership qualities in general (I have always been something of a follower), good insights into journalism.

I most admired a tight-knit group philosophy.

the ability to allow independent function, but also bring the staff together as a team; the ability to create a desire in others to excel, rather than simply accept mediocrity; distinct understanding of all aspects of the task at hand, and a strong knowledge of and ability to perform any of the functions on staff, so that one can truly teach others, or solve problems when they arise, as well as fully understand the process both in its many parts, as well as on the whole (i.e. ability to see and understand both the forest and the trees...); loyalty to the staff; the ability to make strong, often controversial decisions in regard to the newspaper

Devotion to training and giving those eager to participate a chance to perform well.

The ability to inspire and motivate. They had a vision for the paper that extended beyond their college careers.

The ones I admired seemed to care not just about the sheet of paper but about the staff and the people they worked with. And I loved people who were willing to fight for a story or coverage or stand up to anything.

I have always admired the ability of student leaders I have worked with to inspire those around them. Some have been able to do it so effortlessly and efficiently that they are a joy to work with.

The fact the editor was always available at one point or another to get a hold of when problems came up and the way he/she kept the staff together as kind of like a family of friends. In other words, it was an enjoyable place to work. It wasn't as if it was only a job. Yes, there were problems but it never got to the point one never wanted



to be there.

I admired the relationship that they had with our advisor and their journalism skills, most of which I mentioned in number one. What you learn in the classroom, supplements what you learn working on a paper. I think that was something that those editors before me emphasized most. They always said that this type of experience would not surpass classroom instruction. I found also that they were for change and they wanted change. They were all there for the betterment of the publication, and although working for the paper would aid them in the long run, they ultimately wanted to see the paper and its staff members succeed. There were some shortcomings that caused some unfortunate things to happen right before I was chosen as editor. There were two editors before me Girl A and Girl B. Girl A was anti everything. If it was not something that she believed in or something that she wanted to see in "her" paper it was tossed aside. Also, she was very hesitant to work with our new advisor, even to the point where she did things that she knew our advisor would not approve of. (The person who was our advisor previous to the one we have now had been in that position for 31 years.) There was even a time where she threw a tantrum to get her way. After graduation Girl B came in and began to mend fences, but was only there for a semester before I took over as editor. What Girl B did was most of what was mentioned above. She was truly a model. Also, having a new advisor who wanted change and was looking to make a difference was a positive thing.

I always felt it important to value the ideas and opinions of every writer, designer, etc. If people feel as though they are being respected, they are more willing to take part in the creative process.

My editor had a passion for the newspaper that could not be matched. It was inspiring to see someone so dedicated to bettering the student newspaper. My editor was skilled, it seemed, at every aspect of the newspaper. He could talk the advertising jargon, design anything using Quark and schmooze the president of the University in a tough interview. From my editor I learned that I needed to be competent in every aspect of the paper-if I expected someone else to do something I better be able to do it myself.

Our newspaper has seen a major revival in four years, and the individual who started that was able to communicate his vision for the paper and set goals that the staff bought in to. I still keep his vision as the basis for many decisions we make.

They were, for the most part, easy to get along with, and ALWAYS helpful. No question is a stupid question and if you weren't sure, it was OK to ask.

The ability to keep the class together under stressed situations. Sometimes people wonder why they are even on staff. I admire leaders who can give people a purpose, who make others feel important and needed.

I admired their communication skills, motivating personalities, determination and, most of all, and their dedication to the publication.

5. Give examples of ways you tried to emulate the leadership competencies you most admired in newsroom leaders when you became editor in chief or managing editor.

Since my previous editor hardly communicated with the staff or spent much time with the newspaper, I thought of things I wish she had done or implemented into her job and brainstormed ways to improve on that. I didn't so much emulate her leadership competencies as try to do the opposite of what I had experience.

I didn't.

I also tried to remember staffers by name, and to comment on the strengths of their recent assignments.

I had meetings three times a week. In each meeting I said what I needed to communicate to the staff and then I went around the room and listened to ideas. I think i always said, "Any ideas, complaints, suggestions, gripes or thoughts you need to share." Sometimes the best ideas came out of that. People felt comfortable coming to me with ideas. They knew I would listen. Also, if an idea was not so good, or even bad, I would try to find a way to tweak it a little bit and make it a better idea. That way, I don't discourage people who are really trying.

I have tried to earn both respect and friendship (since I was already friends with most of the staff, this proved fairly easy), and to develop my leadership skills, because leading is not something I have ever been particularly comfortable with. I've found that leadership largely consists of making decisions and show that you know what you are doing (or at least look like you do).

I did not. I have my own style.

From the beginning of my work with Student Publications, I feel that I was continuously learning new things about the process and gaining more and more knowledge about the various functions and so forth. Since I was never a journalism major, and never took communications courses, my knowledge of layout/design, AP style, and writing all came from the hands-on experience of working as a copy editor or section editor of the newspaper. These skills built up over time, and were not anything that I necessarily strove to gain, as much as gained by default through various experiences. Otherwise, I simply tried to be confident and sure in my decisions, and be willing to have others disagree with me. There are many times when the staff will not agree with the decision of the managing editor or the editor in chief, and sometimes, it is true, a leader should step back from the decision, but sometimes the editor in chief or managing editor should not let these disagreements sway him/her, if s/he knows the decision being made is the correct one, no matter how many disagreements are made. That sort of analysis of the situation is something very important, and it is something that I have tried to strengthen during my time as managing editor.

I'm unable to answer this question.

At our staff meetings we would vote on the best story and photo of the issue. I would make two certificates, one for them to keep and one that I posted in the newsroom. I would make competitions for the center spread, forcing them to think of new and creative ideas to fill that section. When we started using color on the front and back, I started taking bids for the back page also. We also went bowling and had sleepovers where we were allowed to just sit back, laugh and have fun. We had workshops so the staff could sharpen their skills. We set goals for the paper as a whole and for each individual section. During evaluations, we would determine how close we were to achieving these goals.

I've always tried to tell my staff at every opportunity that they are the reason I show up every day and that they are what makes the newspaper special. I think we've translated that into reader-centered coverage goals as well. I've taken the approach that my job is to make them more able to do their jobs. And I always give people a day off when they need it; it's no use having someone overstressed in the office and it just breeds poor morale.

I tried to make the office an enjoyable place to work by having staff building chances outside of work. These gave staffers the opportunity to get to know someone as more than the news editor, and as a person and friend. I also have tried to unite people with the common goal of producing the best paper we can, by showing what role they have in the paper, and what rewards a good job will have for them.

Communicated to the staff mostly through emails about the great jobs they did either for the semester or on a certain issue. Always kept staff up-to-date on when the newspaper's website was updated as well as getting reports for the number of hits their articles received in case he/she might be interested. Sent out emails listing advice on how he/she can improve on certain things.

I have continued to mend fences with organizations and people on campus that Girl A destroyed. Also upon advancing my skills I now train at workshops that we hold before each semester starts. I have made sure to have a great working relationship with my advisor, advertising staff and newspaper staff members to ensure their trust. I have used a lot of things that I have learned at conventions to better the publication. I brought us through two redesigns of the paper to our present and modern look. I feel that between the efforts of my staff but mostly my managing editor, I have been able to bring the paper back to a student focus. I have changed the assignment sheets and deadlines to make this a better publication.

I listened. No matter how busy I was with the daily operations, I made time to listen to people who took time to sit in my office and offer a suggestion. It's easy to get wrapped up in the chaos at a newsroom, but you need to be able to evaluate your performance and trust in other people's opinions.

While I admired the competence of my editor, what I really took away from his leadership was how I did not want to run my newsroom. I developed my passion for a solid newspaper from my editor but that was where our leadership styles diverged. In my opinion my editor did not think anyone was as zealous about the paper as he was so he took on everything himself. My editor wrote most of the lead stories, took the majority of photos and created all the layouts. To be kind you could say he led by example. On the other hand, I tried to delegate responsibilities and teach skills to my staff.

The aforementioned editor first had to focus on getting the basics of newspaper production and journalism improved and he was able to do that. Of course today we continue to focus on that, but we have now tried to follow his lead in creating a real structure to our staff and bringing together the other elements of journalism so that we build the respect and credibility from our readership..

I like to be easy to get along with, but yet let people know that they must do their work and get it done by deadline. As an editor, I don't like confrontation, but if it comes down to it, I make sure I do it quietly and not in front of the whole newsroom. Prior editors did the opposite, but I like to resolve problems in a professional manner.

I gave everyone on my staff a title/position other than just reporter (such as copy editor, photographer, layout, webmaster). It made them feel needed. It also helped me delegate responsibilities and made us work together as a team because we needed every single person.

I tried to spend more time speaking to reporters and copy editors during the work day to find out how their day was going, how busy they were and any problems with their work I could assist with. I also left notes each week to those doing an exceptional job and tried to always volunteer to do more than more duties without complaining to set a good example.

6. In your expert opinion, what leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors do you think are most important to the effective execution of the role of editor in chief? List as many as you like.

Willingness to learn from mistakes, a passion for continuous improvement and development of the newspaper and staff, creativity, maturity, basic managerial skills and preparedness for ethical situations. Editors should also exhibit the courage and strength to stick to his/her decisions, because they undoubtedly be challenged.

List as many as you like. n Thick skin n Leading by example n Showing people that you know what you're doing n Patience n Keeping friendships out of office n Separating people from problems

COMMUNICATION! Being able to listen and be heard by staffers is very important. And I found that if I was open to listening to suggestions by the staff, then they were much more open to hearing what I had to say. I think it is important for an incoming editor to be able to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses. Here's were a good advisor comes in handy-someone who has been monitoring the paper for some time. Once the base line is found, improvements can be made. I think it is also important for an editor in chief to really have a strong sense of dedication to the paper. For me, it was not a position that I could hold while also participating in many other activities. Editing quickly became one of the top priorities in my life and I think that the dedication encouraged the staff to also give what they could to the production of the paper. I think some of the basics for any leadership position are helpful to an incoming editor: do what you can to help and educate your staff, and be fair and positive in your leadership.

As said, listening is key. Also, keeping an open mind. There are hundreds, thousands of different kinds of people on a college campus. It is important to make sure you don't judge things and vilify people with different ideas. Also, having the skills to write, copyedit and report well are key. IF the editor can't do the job of almost everyone in the newsroom, there is no one for others to ask questions of.

Ability to get people to change bad habits without pissing them off; ability to mediate disputes and step in when things are getting rocky; good attention to both detail and the big picture, which is essential to getting a quality newspaper together; news sense is essential, editors have to be good journalists to lead a newspaper.

You need to gain your fellow worker's respect. That is the most important thing you can do. If they do not respect you then you have lost them forever. How you gain that respect is very tricky. A behavior that I had was that anyone who wanted to be a leader was probably not qualified to be one. I've never cared for bossy types and did not want to become one.

confidence in one's abilities and decisions; willingness to defend the newspaper, its policies, and the employees of the newspaper, when necessary; as stated earlier, a strong knowledge of the process and all aspects of the process of creating and publishing a newspaper; an open mind and an ability to bring a team together, to work together, and to function as a whole, while allowing for individual differences and disagreements in opinion

Sense of duty and honor. Sincere belief in what it takes to put together a quality newspaper. Faith in the potential of people. Trust in the management tier.

Patience. Determination. Strong writing and editing skills. Knowledge of layout and design. A good EIC or ME should be efficient, not necessarily proficient, as the editor of any section. Long-term vision is imperative! With that must come a plan. Upper management must be aware of what is going on in each section. They must be in tune with their staff, understanding their needs, strengths, weaknesses, limitations and abilities.

Motivation, honesty, directness, respect for others, trust is a big one, ability to listen, and maybe most importantly, ability to recognize and admit when you are wrong.

Patience, foresight, competency of various jobs and duties, accessibility, delegation of tasks, current events, open mind, willingness to learn and admit mistakes

He/she should be able to get along with people, treat everyone fairly, know how to write, be experienced in how to write stories, columns, features, know what questions the reporters should ask during interviews, know where the reporters should go to get information for their stories, know how to write cutlines for photos in case the photographers don't do it, be patient, calm and cool during deadlines though at the same time, push to make sure everyone is keeping up to speed on deadlines.

An editor needs to be able to multi-task. It is imperative to be a good listener and to be understanding of the needs of others. I think also that fairness and accuracy not only in journalistic writing but in dealing with others is important. Voice concerns, make educated decisions, think before you speak, have a plan, have a back-up plan, keep emotions in tack (something that is more than difficult to do when you have school, social and family issues to deal with as well.) It is necessary to be competent in aspects of journalism but to understand that there is room for growth.

Promptness - never be late to a meeting, appointment, etc. Effort - if other people see you are trying, they will try Enthusiasm - it's infectious Willingness to go above and beyond to make something look or sound better Always be willing to learn --- editors don't know everything. You can be taught. Professionalism - never lose your temper or talk down to anyone. Expect results - don't discount the papers ability to be a quality publication

An ideal editor should be open and listen to the readers and staff; ideas come from everyone, not just editors. One thing a college editor should understand is that the staff also has classes and a life outside the paper. An editor needs to be patient and organized. An editor should be secure enough to give and receive critiques. An editor should be prepared to stand behind his or her staff 100 percent. An editor should be dependable and be able to give as much as they expect to receive. (As editor I took on the roll of mother. I made sure my staff ate, studied and made it to class on time. I was also a friend. I earned my staff's respect and they earned mine.)

Ability to set goals, make tough decisions and build respect of the staff. Being able to be tough on your staff while still motivating them and keeping them on the team. Willingness to work hard until the job is done.

Patience, consistency and an ear to hear are some of the most important. You must listen to what your co-workers have to say. Their opinions are a big part of the newspaper. You must also be very patient, we all know how some days can go and also, sometimes you have to repeat yourself over and over to get your point across. You must be consistent in what you tell people and make sure you tell everyone the same thing. ( This refers to style, deadlines, behavior in general)

During my reign as editor in chief, my staff fought a first amendment battle against the vice president of the college and covered a presidential search. It was very clear that we had a purpose at the college, we were important, the local newspapers didn't get half as much coverage as us. During these times, my best aspect was keeping us focused as to what was important, keeping us on deadlines, etc. The editor is the

sanity of the staff. People look to the editor for guidance.

COMMUNICATION is key. Determination. Dedication. Motivation. Understanding. Fair. Dependable. Role model. Firm. Strict on deadlines and tasks. Organized. Flexible.

7. What leadership competencies do you lack that you think would have helped you be a more effective leader?

The passion for continuous improvement is difficult to maintain; in the beginning I lacked decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees.

Separating people from problems

Diplomacy and consistency. Being truthful without being destructive is difficult for me. Being constant and dogged enough to implement ideas is a critical flaw.

When I served as editor, the climate on our campus was changing, and the student body started demanding more accountability from the student newspaper. Though I participated in several open panel discussions and met with student leaders to try to help the situations that had built up from several years of little communication between the paper and students, I wish that I had had the foresight to help alleviate some of the tensions before they escalated.

I have a short temper and could be angered pretty quickly. I wasn't one to scream and yell at people, but once I was mad I was hard-headed. I think I need to step back from time to time and examine situations more thoroughly rather than going off the deep end when something goes wrong.

A big one is my willingness to confront problems rather than let them slip by. I think this has become easier as I have settled into my position. Also, keeping organized has always been a big challenge for me (my office is just stacks of paper surrounding a desk with a broken computer).

Communication

I would like to have a stronger ability of bringing people together to work as a team, and possibly a bit more confidence in decision-making, rather than my general tactic of seeking a democratic solution. Sometimes I feel a bit detached from the staff, in an administrative position, that I wish weren't so distant.

Trust in the management tier.

When I see something isn't getting done, I do it myself. That might be good for the end product, but it doesn't teach anyone about respecting the process.

I'm not the most organized person in the world. I'm also not the most tactful. When something needs to get done, I have a tendency to sound curt when I just think I'm being specific. But then, I've wondered if part of the job description isn't just that you're the guy that has to be a jerk when no one else wants to be and someone has to.

More patience, better motivation skills – I could see the final product and know how to get there, but had trouble with bringing my staff along with me

Not very talkative-more of a listener, I am more into the writing of opinion columns and reviews and working on the webpages than being a leader. In other words, I express myself more through writing than taking charge.

Knowing that I am not perfect, I think I could be better at everything. I wish there was a class titled "So, you think you want to be the editor?" I do not know what would make me a better leader. It is not a lost cause, I understand that but I look at this as a learning experience. I do have a problem making decisions and dealing with problems. I allow things to build up to the point where I boil over and then the emotions start flying and that is not a good situation. Some distinguishing factors between the management issue and the leadership role would probably help as well.



I was afraid to approach some people with criticism because I felt like I was in their position. I didn't have a degree -- but in retrospect, I had more to offer than I did. Also, I tended to be too hands-on. I should have had more confidence in the ability of others. Mistakes will happen ... let them and then learn from them.

Unlike my editor, I gave my staff many different responsibilities. Maybe that was wrong. I tried to teach all my staff members what it took to run and produce a college newspaper but it might have been perceived as passing the buck. I wrote very little as editor. I thought it was my job to produce a quality newspaper; to me that meant sharing the menial responsibilities with my staff. I think an up-and-coming editor needs to be made aware of what to expect. (That includes everything from writing out check requests, drumming up advertising and reworking a poorly written story.)

I think I worried too much that criticizing the staff even when they deserved it. I think I should have trusted myself and the staff more that they could handle the criticism. There needs to be more trust and I think that lacked a bit.

A meaner side. I lack the demeanor of the average newsroom editor to scream every now and then. I am way too nice sometimes but can't find it in me to be tougher and sometimes I think that hurts me.

I would often get very frustrated when my staff wasn't trying its hardest and I knew they could do better. This caused me to have somewhat of limited patience.

Flexibility. Being friend and colleague yet also being a manager. Motivation.

8. Before entering the role, what was your biggest misconception about the leadership role of editor in chief or managing editor?

Just how much responsibility an Editor has really surprised me - I and I alone am responsible for everything regarding the newspaper.

I just thought the respect would come, I suppose, which was wrong. Earning people's respect as a leader was more difficult than I thought it would be. I studied books to train myself on leadership skills.

After serving as managing editor, I thought the transition into the editor in chief position would be an easy one. But I soon learned that even though I had been performing the same literal actions as the editor in chief, that the higher level of responsibility was definitely present as chief.

That he or she knows everything and that he or she is arrogant. I think the editor before me had a bit of a God complex. He was never wrong and made people believe he never was. I think I had it in my head that the editor was this all-knowing being that could do no wrong. That's just silly.

My biggest misconception was that the job is largely a thankless task. It has been immensely gratifying to see a good newspaper become better, largely due to the efforts of the section editors, but also because of effective leadership on the parts of both the managing editor and myself. The staffers do seem to appreciate the difficulty job (so much so that no one applied for the position next semester, leaving me with another term in office, as it were). Leading the paper has been stressful, but worth it.

I don't recall having too many prior conceptions of the roles of managing editor or editor in chief. I was the first managing editor that the newspaper had hired since before I began working with the newspaper at all, and I had never really had much association with prior editors in chief. I had a very close relationship with the editor in chief when I began as managing editor, and admired and appreciated her efforts in the position, however those prior to her (during my time on staff, before becoming managing editor) were generally bad examples of what an editor in chief should be, in my opinion, rather than involving any misconceptions of the required functions of the editor in chief.

I'm unable to answer this question.

I thought they were all-knowing. But, we all make mistakes and that is O.K. as long as you learn from them.

That you could see the results of a well run office. You can tell if an office is poorly run, but good management is like counter-terrorism; if you can't tell we're here, we're doing a great job.

I worked closely with the editor before me and knew what the job entailed before taking over, so I did not have many misconceptions. Prior to getting close to the position, I was not aware of the "behind the scenes" work the editors do. I thought the position was just putting the paper out on deadline every night.

That it isn't a full time job. It is in fact a full-time job!!! You have to spend practically every day there or at least be on top of things all the time. Hence the reason why I say, a person who is chosen as editor should have already had a slew of classes under their belt because once they become editor, it's a good bet depending on what kind of publication they are running (be it a daily or bi-weekly paper), they are going to be there almost as much as they would be in a real job or for that matter, studying.

I believed that it would be easier to delegate and tell people what to do and teach them how to do it as opposed to the deadlines of writing a story and getting things in on time. Now I work by what others do which gets frustrating. I thought that people would do their jobs like they are told...but they too are dealing with the same issues as I am on a daily basis. I get aggravated when they do not do their work on time because then I cannot do mine.

I think that I just assumed that everyone in the faculty would want to help the newspaper. Instead, I was met with professors and administrators that didn't want to take a proactive role. I was surprised at the amount of criticism the paper got as opposed to the amount of help offered.

I thought I just needed to be able to write proficiently and know grammar and style rules. Little did I know that being an editor is so much more than that! I wrote very little as editor-I was lucky to squeeze out an editorial before deadline. My job was more about managing people than anything else.

Very early on I just looked at the editor in chief more as the highest copy editor than anything. I knew there were a number of other responsibilities but I didn't understand the extent to which the editor does have to be a leader and also all of the other duties.

That the job would be easy.

I thought that most of the people on my staff would know how to write effective news stories, headlines, and know the basic rules of journalism. I had to teach the majority of my staff these things.

I never thought of the managing editor position being a large "leadership" role at all. I thought of it more as a management position (considering the editor in chief the sole leader) not recognizing how important leadership skills would be and how much of a difference they would make.

9. How has the experience of being a college newspaper editor shaped your understanding of the editor in chief leadership position?

It has helped me appreciate managers/editors who deal with much tougher decisions, whether that be for a professional daily or a student weekly paper. Over time, I have also recognized what skills are crucial for any management position.

Yes, and it makes me respect and want to train the next person who comes down the line. In fact, I organized a three-week induction into the job and the editor's role in the newsroom before leaving office.

I had no idea the amount of work and commitment that goes into the position.

It's a leadership role and one that shapes your future. There is a lot to learn and it helps when you go back to the bottom and have to work as a reporter. Later, you understand why editors make the decisions they do. I understand that editors make mistakes. They work seriously long hours. They're human.

Paperwork. Being the leader of a newspaper requires a lot of paperwork things like payroll and various other accounting tasks. Keeping up with all the organizational stuff has been a unique experience, especially since I am bad enough at keeping myself organized. Although the job does have a lot to do with journalism, it is really about management.

It made me realize how the editor in chief can really set the tone for the entire paper. This is very important.

How could one truly understand the position of editor in chief, if one had no actual relation to it whatsoever? I believe that I view the position in much more realistic terms, a difficult and often frustrating position, rather than some romantic image of easy power from Citizen Kane or some Hollywood rendition of journalism. I understand what a love-hate relationship being a managing editor or editor in chief can be.

It's sort of frightening, but the newspaper becomes the cultural product of your mind. (Which calls for an editor to strive for engagement with the community).

It makes you more aware of the needs of individuals. Some people need praise in order to operate well. Others need to be babied. Others want intensive critiques to better themselves. As much as possible, a leader must determine who needs what to help them grow to the point where they can survive outside of the college environment.

It's really hard, harder than I thought. There's no time when you're not doing anything, and, because of the nature of the job, no one's ever going to say "wow, you did a great job managing today." So it's pretty thankless. And the work, 99 percent of the time, is not glamorous. It's finding scissors and cleaning up after people and fielding stupid phone calls, all so someone else can actually do their job better.

I have realized how important a strong leader is in any organization. If the leader is inefficient or struggles too much, the coworkers may begin to doubt the leader. This can be reflected in the final product.

I have realized that there are a ton of responsibilities that go with the position. A person who is editor as I said, can't be only there 2 or 3 days a week. They need to present 100 percent of the time, if not more so. They are captain of the ship that holds everything together. They fail, the dominoes all fall in line.

It has opened my eyes. You cannot learn this in a classroom and the real world experience is more valuable than you would imagine. I always say that if you are a print major there is nothing better than working on a paper. I recently started working for my local newspaper and they are amazed at my skills and knowledge of programs and journalism style. I think that is the best thing I could gain from my college experience. Without this experience I do not think my education would be complete.

I now understand the pressure to perform. Everything in newspapers is dependent on something else. That is, if a writer (who may feel insignificant) doesn't complete a story, it creates a mess for the entire staff - from production designers to the section editor to the EIC. It's a trickle-down effect. I think that I learned the importance of being responsible more than anything else.

I'm not sure that it has. I think the role of a college editor is way different than that of an editor in the real world. In my experience a college editor is more like a business manager than a journalist.

I realize now how much a good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility. I also realize that someone who is happy with the status quo really does nothing for a newspaper and that mindset can really show.

It has shown me that there is a lot more to the position than I thought. And also, there are so many things that flood into your office, and it takes time and patience to sort everything out and try to have a good day on a regular basis.

It taught me how to deal with people. Sometimes my staff didn't know how to do something and didn't want to ask. I had to read into people and make sure that I didn't talk down to people.

Now I fully understand that the editor must take the reins of all aspects of the publication but also must have other managers to help ensure that leadership is carried throughout all sections of the newsroom.

10. Do you think there are any leadership competencies that are unique to being a college editor in chief (as opposed to professional leadership roles)?

No. I believe that, while the job description may be different, the same basic competencies are crucial, no matter what management or leadership position it may be. Without those skills, no manager or leader can run their company and staff effectively.

Yes. The people you work with at the professional level WANT to be there, or at least have a better paycheck to work for. In the college setting, people are working for peanuts (or nothing at all) and are trying to figure out if journalism is what they want to do for a living.

Flexibility is critical for a student staff. Striking the right balance between policies and procedures and the realities of each staff, is critical to making things work.

Yes! College editors also have to contend with student's class schedules. Mid-terms and final exams can really pose a problem for student editors without careful preplanning and the commitment of the staff.

You really have to deal with unhappy people more. One thing I always said is that no matter what we print, someone is going to be mad. We could print a preview about a peace rally and someone would be upset that we didn't write as long a piece on their event. That's the way it goes. You have to understand that no matter what, someone is upset and you can't please everyone. There is never a right answer. There is just what you know and what you put on the paper's pages.

Being able to motivate people is especially important. Writers and editors are doing the paper in addition to school work, other jobs and whatever sliver of social life we are trying to maintain. It helps if the staff is paid, but even then, this is not some people's primary activity, and it is important to hold on to those who are not as wrapped up in the paper as you are.

No

I think that most leadership competencies, excluding specifics, are relatively transferable and could be used in a leadership role in most any setting. There aren't really any of which I can think that are specific to being a college editor in chief, and not applicable to any other field.

How to deal with the student/journalist problem as well as an understanding of the demographics world view.

Learning people's needs and always having to remember that this is a learning environment. In the professional world, you are expected to know it already. Here, what you don't know in September you should know by December.

I don't know if Howell Raines took angry calls from every idiot on the street, but I doubt it. So you're a lot more directly connected to your readership. There's also the problem of your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers, since you go from being one of them (a staff member) to being their boss. And of course, you have one or maybe two years to learn a job, where editors at major papers would consider themselves fully acclimated after about that much time. And there's always the fact that everyone thinks you're put out by the University and therefore a mouthpiece, even when you're critical.

College leaders must realize that the people they work with not only put in long hours at the paper, but must deal with a full class schedule, homework, relationships,

hangovers and everything else that comes with college. Some of these carry over to the real world, but only in college do they all merge in the same place. A good leader must be able to manage all these themselves, and also help those around him manage them, and still put out a great paper.

For me, I am perfectionist. Stanley Kubrick shot a scene more than 30 times in his films before he was happy with a shot. For me, I like to make sure that when we publish an issue that we aren't putting something out that will make us into a laughing stock. I cringe every time I see spelling errors in headlines or in stories or cutlines. I am the type of person who will have to look over the pages more than 10 times (provided there is time) to make sure the articles are free of any errors. Unfortunately as it turns out, no matter how many times you look at the issues, you still find something that was missed.

Being a leader also means that you are not just a leader in your organization, here being a leader for the entire University. That is the main distinguishing factor. It is hard to go to a class where a teacher does not know you are the editor. I serve on many university committees and participate in a lot of activities. It is important to do that. Networking within the university community is also imperative. It is hard to just be a student looking to work hard for a degree...you are really a full time leader 24/7. You become a model for other students, even those who are not in your line of study.

Sure! Unlike a professional, a student editor relies on students who have lives outside of their extra-curricular participation in the newspaper. Professionals depend on their performance to receive compensation. They can't bite the mouth that feeds them. College students, on the other hand, don't have the level of commitment so an editor is responsible for helping to get results out of people who don't need them to survive.

I think the duties are much broader as a college editor than in the professional world. I had to plan the budget, organize the staff meetings and distribute the paper along with a million other things. In the real world I imagine there are all sorts of people to do non-journalistic things for the editor.

Not really. Again, I think that before taking the job I didn't realize the extent to which leadership in this position is as critical as it is in any other job.

I think it is similar to professional leadership roles, however, I was not dealing with people with college degrees, I was dealing with students of all ages (18-40's).

Yes. It is sometimes difficult to get college students to work when they aren't getting paid or are not getting paid much and to get them to respect a student boss. Time management is also key. Student journalists must balance school and the publication so the publication is not the priority of most.

# 11. What separates an average student newsroom leader from a great newsroom leader?

An average newsroom leader treats the job as just that - a job. There is no excitement for improvement or passion to develop the newspaper and the staff into their full potential. A great newsroom leader does just the opposite; he/she is constantly working with all areas involving the newspaper and continually looks for new opportunities to become involved as a voice of the campus community.

The ability to command attention by just walking in the room. Not being the go-to person for everything, but being a great newsroom leader means training people how to do things for themselves.

Leadership. Management can be taught; Leadership can only be learned.

I think the difference between "average" and "great" lies in the attitude of the leader. Positive criticism makes all the difference, especially when working with people who a semester ago, may have been your peer or your boss!

You can tell a great newsroom leader when you look at the paper in the first edition and the last. Improvement is the key. The first edition has mistakes. More than anyone would like. It's a new group working on the paper. Not everyone is sure about themselves, including the editor. It's difficult. But if the last edition is better, fewer mistakes, neater copy, better stories, the editor is succeeding. If the editor learns, and the people around him or her learn, that leader is a success.

Vision for what the paper should be, and the ability to implement that. At the same time, the leader must be able to incorporate others' ideas into the master plan, and work with everyone to improve the quality of the newspaper. Given the corporate nature of the media today, this is probably the only time we will work for truly independent publications, and it is important to take advantage of the freedom this provides to create a unique newspaper.

Respect. If a person comes in with the attitude that they are the leader then they will lose some people immediately. You have to firm, but fair. It is easier to lead by example than it is to constantly tell people you are a leader. How you present yourself is very important. If you separate yourself from the rest then you are stating that you are better than they are. The people under you are very important to your success as editor. They should be treated as such. Spending some casual time with the staff can always be beneficial.

Dedication to the task and willingness to put forth as much effort and time as necessary to achieve what s/he desires in the newspaper...Dedication to the staff and the ability to make the employees as dedicated to the task as s/he is...Ability to teach and strengthen the talents of the staff, to create a better newspaper, rather than simply accepting what the employees offer initially and seeking no progression of those talents.

Passion and a devotion to being a student of journalism. (Resume builders need not apply. They damage the culture of the newsroom for several semesters after they leave...)

Power to change, inspire and motivate. An average leader can edit stories and lead staff meetings. A great leader inspires editors to always do their best. Motivates them to win awards. Shows them how much there is to learn and helps them learn it.

I think a great leader needs to really take joy out of working with other people and seeing them achieve. If you're a product-oriented person, you won't enjoy the job enough to be good at it.

The ability to motivate, and get the most out of coworkers.



The average student newsroom leader is someone who is just there to add the position of editor to their resume or list of activities they were involved with in college. They'll do it for a semester or two just to get the experience but that is it. They don't put their "all" into it and help try and churn out a publication that's worth reading. A great newsroom leader will give a full 110 percent to the job because not only does he or she want to be happy with what they are putting out, but he/she wants to also be proud of the staff they had working under them.

I do not think anything sets you aside or separates you. I think that a great newsroom leader and a student newsroom leader are looking to go toward the same thing...they want to move their newspapers forward. I am sure they encounter some of the same things and have a lot of the same issues. I do not see anything different.

Passion - be passionate in all that you do and you will see the benefits of that dedication. It's easy to start to lose faith your ability because you can't control the actions of others, but be passionate and you will find solutions to the problems you face.

From what I've experienced, friendship was one of the greatest things I brought to the newsroom. I cared about my newspaper and my staff and I think that showed in our work. The paper, and my role as editor, would have not been nearly as successful if I didn't have the support of my staff.

Someone who has a vision for the paper and wants to improve it rather than someone who is interested in the position and sees the paper on an issue-by-issue basis.

Average just goes with the flow and lets things just go by. A great one gets involved, helps out and makes sure tomorrow's product is better than the day before.

Average leaders carry out every day duties no problem. Great newsroom leaders give their staff a purpose, encouragement, and guidance.

A great newsroom leader knows the works of the publication and knows students need fun in the newsroom. However, a great leader knows when it is time to be carefree college students, friends and have fun and when it is time to be professional and lead by example in getting the job done.

12. What do you regard as the most significant shortfall in leadership among most college newspaper editors?

Many college editors set out to "change the world" from the very beginning and become discouraged when they realize just how much they're dealing with. They settle into just "doing their job" and end up going through the motions of being a manager.

They don't know journalism or don't know how to lead - or have a lethal combination of the two.

Resume-builders who regard college publications as a stepping stone to a job "the real world." I don't think most college newsroom leaders appreciate the priceless opportunity to be creative and innovative.

I think many student editors place too little emphasis on educating their staffers, and learning themselves. For many, the college paper is one of the major stepping stones to a career in journalism, and can be an excellent teaching forum. It's not just about getting 12 pages to the presses every night; it's also about what was learned in producing those 12 pages.

They become very one-sided. They either attack everyone who is different or try to make everyone happy. It can't be like that. Attack those who need to be attacked and praise those who do well. Some editors don't know how to do that.

Inability to communicate well with others. Often, it is a lot easier to just make decisions and change things than to consult with other people on the staff, especially when up against a deadline.

Humility

Confidence and responsibility, most likely, and this is probably because many advisors do not attempt to instill such qualities, or allow such qualities to form, in editors. I would love to see a newspaper where an editor in chief and managing editor truly have control over the newspaper, and all of its various aspects, with the advisor's function simply to advice, rather than the advisor having ultimate control, and the business/advertising portion being completely detached from the editorial side. Perhaps this freedom and responsibility is common at many other newspapers, but my experience has been otherwise, and I suspect such is the case at most newspapers.

The majority are either political sycophants or byline junkies... (or from the wrong socio-economic class)

Lack of vision. Some editors believe they exist to help the paper function, not to excel.

It's an old cliché but it's true: you promote great writers and create terrible editors. The skills are almost unrelated. My job is maybe 10 percent journalism. When you're a writer or even section editor, you have something you can point to every day and say "I did that." If you go into management expecting that, you'll find yourself very, very disappointed and probably miserable.

Taking too much on their plate, and not being willing to delegate tasks to others around them.

That things aren't planned very well in advance. Everything is a take it as it comes kind of deal. Very few take it on themselves to take charge. It took years before someone like myself decided to step up and start getting the newspaper online and I didn't even have any experience with online internet software-I had to learn it on my

own. Today, because of me, (and no I am not trying to toot my own horn here), the college newspaper I work for has a website that's updated on a regular basis and current averages about 20,000 hits a month overall when all the pages are combined. Other shortfalls are the fact some people who are put into the position don't quite have the journalism experience or they are only there part of the time.

Knowledge on how to do the job effectively and efficiently. I find that I fly by the seat of my pants most of the time. It is a learning experience...but to find ways to make it better for the editor and the staff is a trying experience. I try things with hopes of them working, and when they don't I scratch it and move to the next plan with hopes of things getting better.

Time constraints. It's difficult to take on such an important role on campus and still perform in the classroom. It's essential to balance the two and still have fun because before you know it, your college experience is over.

I'm not sure because I don't really know many other college newspaper editors. But from my experience former editors have taken too much responsibility on themselves and become overwhelmed leaving behind a green staff.

I think the hardest thing is that the role is short-lived and just as you get comfortable in the position it's time to train your replacement. The short tenure makes it difficult for papers to develop strategic plans for improvement.

disorganization

Patience. A lot of times student staff members may take advantage of student editors, and this can cause an editor to lose their patience.

Not enough organization because the time for it is not always there. When organization lacks, this wastes more time since it takes more time to get everything done and things just fall apart.

13. Specific to the subject of student newsroom leadership, what would you like to add that you think would advance the understanding of that role?

New editors should be as aware as possible of the situations they are going to face when taking on the role of a newsroom leader. While many things are only learned when they encounter those unique situations, gaining an understanding of the position as much as possible will help to prepare them for when those situations do occur.

It's important to simply recognize that a great leader isn't just born. It doesn't just happen. It takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader.

College is a time of great promise and discovery. Speaking abstractly, an editor's aim should be to capture that spirit, to lasso it with words and images and hold it briefly — bucking and neighing — for daily consumption in newsprint.

I think it's very important for the editor in chief to have the experience of holding other newsroom positions.

It's hard work. Make sure you know that you are putting out a paper that thousands of people are reading. Don't take it lightly. The information you put out affects the opinions and thoughts of a lot of people. The end product is a reflection of you. If you half-ass it, it shows. If you work hard, it shows. You get better results if you work hard. Even if you don't have great writers or lower editors, it shows when you work hard and put effort into the paper. People will notice.

This is like the "Is there anything I haven't asked you that I should have?" question I always ask at the end of an interview. I can't think of anything specific that I haven't touched on in the previous questions. It's a crazy position of responsibility to be in at the age of 20, or whatever, and it says a lot about those who can do it successfully while meeting their other commitments.

Everyone talks about leadership like it can be taught. It can't be. It is one's character and it requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be. The minute you believe that you are a "leader" you are treating everyone else as followers. People have their own ideas. By being what the definition of a leader is today, you tend to not listen to their ideas. Being Editor does not make one a god, and there are many people in college who are convinced they are leaders when they are not. I never expected anyone to like me just respect me, and they did. They knew that I would do anything and they would, too. When you can get the most out of people then you are doing something right.

I can't really think of anything. I think it's been covered. Maybe that anyone who thinks (or has experience with) that the duty of an editor in chief or managing editor is simply to come in on publication day(s) and look at the paper for five minutes, then say 'Okay, whatever,' and walk out, should really expect more of those figures. While those previous to myself and the editor in chief when I began would often do this, the editor in chief and I both began a habit of staying until the last pages were finished, and looked over, and were the last to leave the office. In the three years since then, it has become the common practice among me and subsequent editors in chief, and the old habit has never even been considered. In fact, this technique has led to more involvement in the correction process among the other members of the editorial staff, as well. While, at first, it was the editor in chief and myself who made the corrections and changes, now most editors feel obligated to remain and make their own final changes to their sections. At any rate, any newspaper staff, it seems, should expect their editor in chief and/or managing editor to at least remain until the newspaper is finished, so that they actually know what has happened and what is

going out, it seems, rather than having some offhanded association with the process.

College papers are probably the most important thing for print journalism in the age of the passing of the baby boomers. Good college papers condition young citizens to become readers of print journalism...which gets us to that whole democracy gig...

Don't call your paper a student newspaper. It is a professional newspaper run by students. Therefore the staff must conduct themselves as such. Compare yourselves to papers that you emulate not that are on your level.

A student paper is many things, and one of those is a learning experience. The sheet of paper that comes out every day you will likely not remember in 20 years or even next week. You will remember the experiences and especially the people, and I think that's the only way to approach management of a student paper; with emphasis on the people you work with, your staff, and the people you work for, your readers.

My biggest learning experience this semester has been in my interaction with other managers and leaders at the paper. Through many opportunities, I have learned when I need to step up myself, and take on extra work or help someone finish their job. I have also learned when to delegate a task to another staffer, and allow them to do the work. Doing this, I have learned, is a great way to show trust in coworkers. Knowing when to delegate and when to put the effort on my own shoulders is something I can carry into future leadership opportunities.

They should take the job as editor seriously like this was their actual full-time job. If they don't take it seriously, then the rest of the staff won't really care about what they are doing as well.

It is a real newsroom, it is a real job. The publication does not just make itself. It takes the work of 15-20 people to get it out. I do not get much sleep...but manage to keep my studies and everything else in my life in tact. It is real and a real experience. I get phone calls at 4 a.m. telling me there is a problem. I have to fix it. The job is never done until the last paper of the semester is sent, and even after that I am there during vacation time making changes to make the next semester even better. Students and faculty members on the campus do not understand this, and to hear their negative comments after only getting 2 hours of sleep because of problems just hurts a lot.

I think that it's important to take advantage of all the opportunities available to a student editor. Go to conferences, seek out the advice of local professionals, talk to faculty members about your issues and work hard at improving the publication while improving your media skills as well.

In my experience the job of college editor needs to be taken on by someone committed to the cause. The job is way more involved and taxing than the stipend or recognition covers. The person that accepts the job needs to love the challenges of journalism.

I think a carefully planned out transition can really help newspaper editors who are starting out. If you just start and have to learn the job yourself it is hard to build up the staff since you have to focus on yourself. When an editor can come in and be confident in his or her standing and know what he or she wants to accomplish, that makes all of the difference

You have to be someone willing to pull long hours and have plenty of patience. It's not as easy as it may look or sound.

Teachers and students at the college would sometimes confuse my advisor's and mine roles not realizing that I was the one who chose the content, edited, and set the deadlines. People would just assume talk to an adult/professor rather than a student. My advisor would tell them to talk to me and sometime they would, but more likely than not they wouldn't bother. My point is, editors are more important than the advisors when it comes to publishing the paper. However, when it comes to administrator, professor, and student relationships, it is best to talk to the advisor.

Student newsroom leaders must be willing to work with others and learn from others but must always lead by example in their work ethics on how they want their employees to work.

**APPENDIX F**  
**E-MAILS TO PANELISTS**

Letter to participants who responded to Round One

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your answers to Round One of the Leadership study. Your thorough answers reflect the time and thought you so generously gave to each question. Your willingness to give your valuable time and energy to research concerning student newsroom leaders is remarkable considering your demanding schedule.

I am busy preparing Round Two of the Leadership Study. It will take far less time to complete than Round One. It will reflect the many contributions of all participants and seek your input.



February 8, 2004

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

You, as well as other members of the expert panel, were very thorough in answering the questions in Round One. As a result, I think the study will be more significant. Thank you for the time and effort you put into your answers.

Round Two contains all of your replies (a few were collapsed due to identical or similar content). The point of Round Two is to build consensus about the behaviors and competencies the panel considers most important to the leadership of college newspapers. There are 7 questions that require you to simply "point and click."

You will receive an e-mail with a link to Round Two in the next few days. It's important that you answer the questions using this link. If you have any problems, please call me at 281-859-4620 or 281-649-3000 ext. 2247. You can e-mail me at [arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu). Your participation is critical to the study.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Alice J. Rowlands  
Primary Investigator  
Texas A&M University

**APPENDIX G**  
**ROUND TWO QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu)

Dear {Participant's name},

Thank you for participating as an expert panelist in Round One of the study to identify the basic journalism and leadership competencies necessary for the effective execution of the role of editor in chief.

Round Two is a compilation of the expert panels' responses to Round One questions. The goal of Round Two is to reach consensus on those journalism and leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors that are widely regarded as **most** critical.

Please complete Round Two at your earliest convenience.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUND TWO**

This constitutes Round Two of the study. This round will also be conducted entirely online.

To proceed, please [click here](#)

If you have any questions regarding this information please email the webmaster at [jantony@cdlnr.tamu.edu](mailto:jantony@cdlnr.tamu.edu)

Thank you,

Alice



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlr.tamu.edu)

## Round Two

Most leadership experts agree there is no such thing as the perfect leader. However, Peters (2001) maintains there is benefit in knowing if there is widespread agreement about the components that constitute the competencies, skills, and behaviors **most** valued in leaders. Peters states that the absence of one of these components would be likely to cause more group problems than the absence of any other less widely regarded as critical.

Please answer the following 7 questions

**Q1) The expert panel identified the following as basic "journalism" competencies and skills an incoming editor in chief or managing editor should have.**

Please rate how important each 'skill' is to that role.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Copy editing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Reporting skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. AP Style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Headline writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Photography skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Computer trouble-shooting skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How to write leads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Design and layout	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Grammar skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Mastery of computer software (QuarkXPress, Photoshop)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Mastery of basic news story structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate each 'competency' as it relates to the role of editor in chief.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Knowledge of production process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Reporting experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Understands importance of news judgement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Understands readership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Knowledge of ethical standards in journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Knowledge of media law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. One year college newspaper experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Newspaper internship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Basic understanding of advertising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Journalism background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Knowledge of photojournalism (graphic and legal points concerning images)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q2) The expert panel identified the following as "leadership" competencies (skills) and behaviors most important to the effective execution of the role of a top newsroom leader.**

Please rate each 'competency (skill)' as it relates to that role.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. A preparedness for ethical situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Knowledge of media law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Demonstrates journalism competencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Ability and willingness to educate your staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Ability to communicate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Ability to set goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Ability to build a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Ability to make tough decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Expects results from staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Separating people from problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. In touch with the student community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Organized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Preparedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Understand the staff also has classes and a life outside of the paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Secure enough to give and receive critiques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Leads by example	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Accessibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Ability to listen to staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Participates in workshops, conferences, and courses to develop skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Ability to motivate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Experience holding other newsroom positions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Ability to delegate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Ability to reward and reprimand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please rate each <b>'behavior'</b> as it relates to the role of editor in chief.				
EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Open minded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Mature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Courageous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Decisive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Unflappable, excellent anger management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Patient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Dedication to the paper and staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Fair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Exhibits positive attitude	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Determined	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Long-term vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Inspiring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Honesty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Straightforward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Trusting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Tolerant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Enthusiastic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Consistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Motivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Dependable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Prompt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Firm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Self-confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. A passion to improve and develop newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Nurturing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Supportive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Compassion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Sense of humor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Q3) The expert panel identified the following as leadership competencies they "lacked."

Please rate how critical you think the 'lack' of these leadership competencies are to that role.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	NOT CRITICAL	LESS CRITICAL	CRITICAL	MOST CRITICAL
1. Experience with all aspects of the newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Passion for continuous improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Ability to separate people from problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Consistency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Diplomacy and tact (being truthful without being destructive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Foresight and ability to confront problems before they escalate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Confidence in decision-making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Ability to bring people together as a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Ability to delegate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Refraining from completing other people's assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Oral communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Ability to take charge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Confidence in myself and others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Patience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Ability to motivate staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Ability to control anger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Ability to inspire other staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Ability to communicate vision to staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Lacked awareness of the difficult situations editor in chief must face	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q4) The expert panel identified the following as "experiences" that helped shape their understanding of the editor in chief leadership position.**

Please rate each skill as it relates to the role of editor in chief.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Better understand the commitment and obligation involved in teambuilding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. That editors must deal with very tough decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Leadership training is important for success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The editor in chief is captain of the ship that holds everything together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. It's a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Has a lot to do with journalism, but it is really about leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The importance of the editor setting the tone of the entire paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. It's not just a title, it is not glamorous, it's a difficult and often frustrating position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. People need praise and recognition to operate well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Because of the nature of the job, no one's ever going to say 'wow, you did a great job today.'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



11. Most of the work you do is so someone else can actually do his/her job better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Most stressful position I have ever held with enormous pressure to perform	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. It taught me how to deal with people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Importance of editor being engaged with the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Leadership cannot be taught	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Must be willing to learn from others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Leadership is about character and requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be treated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Must always lead by example	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Editor must love the challenges of journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. A student newspaper is a professional newspaper run by students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. The joy that comes from seeing your hard work pay off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q5) The expert panel identified the following as "unique" to the college editor in chief role (as opposed to professional leadership roles).**

Please rate how important these situations were to your experience with that role.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	NOT IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Staff changes more frequently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. College leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. All or part of the staff is unpaid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Dealing with uncommitted students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teaching is a continuous activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. College students are more likely to quit if they aren't excited about the job (motivation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. You're more connected to your readership and must deal directly with more unhappy readers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. You have one or maybe two years to learn a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Everyone thinks the paper is put out by the university and therefore it's a mouthpiece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. You become a model for other students, even those	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

who are not in your line of study

12. Get your peers to respect you, which is often difficult on the collegiate level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Duties are much broader as a college editor than in the professional world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. It's an enormous amount of responsibility for a college student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. The college editor has more creative freedom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Maternal/paternal role. Make sure staff eats, studies and makes it to class on time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Some students are very sensitive about their work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. It takes time for the staff to stop seeing you as a peer and realize you're their editor and their boss	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q6) The expert panel identified the following competencies, skills, and behaviors they say separate an "average" newsroom leader from a "great" newsroom leader.**

Please identify the degree of importance for each.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	NOT IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Compassion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Dedication to newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Has staffs' respect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Passion for journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Looks for opportunities to become involved as a voice of the campus community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Ability to command attention by just walking in the room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Ability to offer positive criticism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The willingness to learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The ability to teach and guide staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Vision for the paper and the ability to implement that vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Ability to incorporate others' ideas into the master plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. To be firm, but fair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Lead by example	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Ability to inspire staff members to reach higher goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Ethical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Give staff encouragement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Knows when it is time to have fun and when it is time to be professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Operates by a standard of excellence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Regard college newspaper as more than a stepping-stone to a job in the 'real world'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. The ability to motivate coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Establishes unique relationships with everyone on staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Ability to build a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Goes above or beyond the call of duty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q7) The expert panel identified the following "shortfalls" as having a negative impact on the leadership success of college editors in chief. In your experience, what impact do these "shortfalls" have on the role of editor in chief?**

Please identify the degree of significance for each.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	NOT SIGNIFICANT	LESS SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	MOST SIGNIFICANT
1. Editors with 'agendas' tend to isolate the staff, preventing accurate reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Becoming discouraged when they realize they can't 'change the world'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Insufficient journalism background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. They don't know how to lead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Resume-builders who regard college newspaper only as a stepping stone to a job in 'the real world'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. They don't appreciate the priceless opportunity college newspapers offer for creativity and innovation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Fails to view newsroom and role as an excellent teaching forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Attempts to make everyone happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Attacks everyone who is different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Inability to communicate and consult with staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Lacks humility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Lacks confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Fails to take responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Lack of vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Failure to organize and report long-term, meaningful projects that would impact the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Not willing to delegate tasks to others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Majority are either political sycophants or byline junkies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX H**  
**ROUND THREE QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
 Principal Investigator  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Texas A&M University  
 281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
 Committee Chair  
 Associate Professor  
 Texas A&M University  
 979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
 Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
 World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu)

Dear {Participant's name},

Thank you for being a dedicated participant on this expert panel. Your responses have been extremely thorough. The time you have been willing to give is significant to the advancement of knowledge concerning college newsroom leadership.

This round, as well as a fourth round if necessary, is designed to build and reach consensus. As a result, they will be much shorter and require less time to complete. The plan is for the data collection, and therefore your participation, to be completed by mid-April. Again, this project would not be possible without your help.

Please complete Round Three at your earliest convenience.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUND THREE**

This constitutes Round Three of the study. This round will also be conducted entirely online.

To proceed, please [click here](#)

If you have any questions regarding this information please email the webmaster at [jantony@cdlnr.tamu.edu](mailto:jantony@cdlnr.tamu.edu)

Thank you,

Alice



**Alice J. Rowlands**  
Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
281-649-3000 Ext. 2247  
[arowlands@hbu.edu](mailto:arowlands@hbu.edu)

**Larry M. Dooley**  
Committee Chair  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University  
979-862-7574  
[l-dooley@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dooley@tamu.edu)

**Center for Distance Learning Research**  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-1588  
Telephone: 979.862.7125 Fax: 979.862.7127  
World Wide Web: [www.cdlr.tamu.edu](http://www.cdlr.tamu.edu)

## Round Three

In the last Round you used a Likert Scale to rate 189 leadership components the panel previously identified. Since the goal of this study is to identify those skills, competencies, and behaviors regarded as **most** important, only those items with the highest ratings from Round Two have been returned to the panel for consensus in this Round. The goal of Round Three is to reach consensus about the **most** valued or critical competencies. This Round will also solicit input regarding your opinions on leadership training.

Please choose only the 3 **most** important leadership components from the list for each question.

**Q1) The expert panel identified the following 10 basic journalism "skills" and 9 basic journalism "competencies" as important for an incoming editor in chief.**

From the list of 10 basic journalism "skills," please choose three you regard as **most** important.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Mastery of basic news story structures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Grammar skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Copy editing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Writing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Reporting skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Ability to write leads	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. AP Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Design and layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Mastery of computer software (QuarkXPress, Photoshop)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Headline writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	

From the list of 9 basic journalism "competencies," please choose three you regard as **most** important.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Understands journalism standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Knowledge of ethical standards in journalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3. Understands importance of news judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Knowledge of production process	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Understands readership	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Knowledge of media law	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Reporting experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. One year college newspaper experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Journalism background	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q2) The expert panel identified the following 15 leadership "competencies" and 10 leadership "behaviors" as important for an incoming editor in chief.**

From the list of 15 leadership "competencies," please choose three you regard as **most** critical.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Ability to communicate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Ability to make tough decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Ability and willingness to educate your staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Communicates with newspaper's managers and leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Ability to set goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Ability to listen to staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Ability to learn from and admit mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Leads by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Ability to delegate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Ability to identify the paper's strengths and weaknesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Expects results from staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Ability to gain your fellow worker's respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14. Ability to motivate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Ability to build a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	



From the list of 10 leadership "behaviors," please choose <u>three</u> you regard as <b>most</b> critical.		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Dependable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Dedication to the paper and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. A passion to improve and develop the newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Decisive	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Consistent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Mature	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Open minded	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q3) "Lack" of any of the following 8 leadership "competencies" was considered critical by the panel.		
From the list of 8 leadership "competencies," please choose <u>three</u> , the lack of which, you regard as <b>most</b> critical.		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Lacks ability to take charge	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Lacks ability to recognize that it takes training and sometimes failing to succeed as a leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Lacks ability to motivate staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Lacks passion for continuous improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Lacks confidence in decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Lacks ability to communicate vision to staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Lacks oral communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Lacks decision-making skills when dealing with incompetent employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q4) The expert panel identified the following 12 leadership "experiences" as important to shaping their understanding of the editor in chief role.		
From the list of 12 leadership "experiences," please choose <u>three</u> you regard as <b>most</b> important.		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Must be willing to learn from others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. A good, capable editor in chief can really transform a newspaper and build credibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3. It's a full-time position that requires a significant time commitment ☐
4. A student newspaper is a professional newspaper run by students ☐
5. Editor must love the challenges of journalism ☐
6. It's not just a title, it is not glamorous, it's a difficult and often frustrating position ☐
7. That editors must deal with very tough decisions ☐
8. It taught me how to deal with people ☐
9. Must always lead by example ☐
10. Leadership is about character and requires you to treat people exactly as you want to be treated ☐
11. People need praise and recognition to operate well ☐
12. Most of the work you do is so someone else can actually do his/her job better ☐

**Q5) The panel of experts identified 8 unique "situations" they considered most important to the college editor's leadership role (as opposed to professional editors).**

From the list of 8 unique "situations," please choose three you regard as **most** important to the college editor's leadership role.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Staff changes more frequently <input type="checkbox"/>		
2. Must manage everything, and also help those around you manage, and still publish a great paper <input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Dealing with uncommitted students <input type="checkbox"/>		
4. College leaders must be more flexible because student journalists balance school, other jobs, and the newspaper <input type="checkbox"/>		
5. Teaching is a continuous activity <input type="checkbox"/>		
6. Your employees being sort of, but not really, your peers <input type="checkbox"/>		
7. It takes time for the staff to stop seeing you as a peer and realize you're their editor and their boss <input type="checkbox"/>		
8. College students are more likely to quit if they aren't excited about the job (motivation) <input type="checkbox"/>		

**Q6) The expert panel identified the following 10 leadership "competencies," "skills" and "behaviors" that separate an "average" newsroom leader from a "great" newsroom leader.**

From the list of 10 leadership "competencies," "skills" and "behaviors," please choose three you regard as **most** important in identifying a 'great' newsroom leader.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Ethical	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Dedication to newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Goes above or beyond the call of duty	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. The willingness to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. The ability to teach and guide staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Ability to offer positive criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Operates by a standard of excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Vision for the paper and the ability to implement that vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Has staffs' respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Leads by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Q7) The expert panel identified the following 11 leadership "shortfalls" as having a significant impact on the success of college editors in chief.**

From the list of 11 leadership "shortfalls," please choose three you regard as **most** significant.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	CHOOSE (Only 3)	REMARKS (If Any)
1. Inability to communicate and consult with staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Fails to take responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. They don't know how to lead	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Lacks confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. They settle for mediocrity from themselves and others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Lack of vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. They don't give 100 percent because they think, 'It's only a college paper'	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Failure to develop strategic plans for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Not willing to delegate tasks to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Failure to maintain relationships with the staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Lacks humility	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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The final 5 questions request information concerning your leadership **training** and **recommendations** for effective ways to teach college newsroom leadership.

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Experts tell us leadership can be taught. In an ideal world, as one panelist stated, "A key to having a successful college program is to create a leadership structure that will pull in students their freshman year and then prepare them for editor positions." In the world of college newsrooms there is little time for leadership training. Many editors in chief learn their skills through on-the-job training in other leadership positions. Some college journalists, including members of this panel, were recruited directly from the rank of reporter. They began their positions without leadership training or even the benefit of holding previous newsroom leadership positions.

---

**Q8) Did you receive formal leadership training (course, seminar, workshop) before you became editor in chief?**

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☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many hours of leadership training did you receive? (If no, please proceed to the next question)

Less than 8 hours ☐

8 hours ☐

2-3 day seminar ☐

5 day seminar ☐

Other, please explain below:




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**Q9) Did you receive leadership training during your tenure as top newsroom leader?**

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☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe that training in the space below:



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**Q10) During your time as a college newsroom leader, describe an individual with whom you interacted on a regular basis, who had the greatest impact on your ability to lead.**

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**Q11) If you decided to take another leadership role, explain why you would or would not seek formal leadership training?**

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**Q12) Given the short tenure of most college journalists, what is the most effective way to educate new editors about those leadership competencies, skills, and behaviors deemed most important to their success?**

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Prior to beginning the role:



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While on the job:

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **PERMISSION TO USE CDLR ELECTRONIC TOOLS IN APPENDICES**



## Center for Distance Learning Research

Texas A&M University, 1588 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-1588

Voice: (979) 862-7125 Facsimile: (979) 862-7127

World Wide Web: [www.cdlnr.tamu.edu/](http://www.cdlnr.tamu.edu/)

From: Dr. Rod Ham  
Associate Director  
Center for Distance Learning Research  
College of Education and Human Development  
April 7, 2005

To whom it may concern:

The Web-based instruments, used for data collection in the May 2005 dissertation by Alice J. Rowlands titled: "Student Identified Leadership Competencies, Skills, Behaviors and Training Needs: Perspectives of College Newspaper Editors" and that reside on the Center for Distance Learning Research Texas A&M University server, were created for facilitation of electronic questionnaires and controlled feedback for this research. Representations of these electronic tools are included in the Appendix of the dissertation identified above with the express permission of the Center for Distance Learning Research in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University.

## VITA

Alice J. Rowlands  
15915 Blaire Court  
Houston, Texas 77095-3700

### Education

Doctor of Philosophy  
Educational Administration and Human Resource Development  
Texas A&M University, May 2005.

Master of Arts  
Mass Communications  
University of West Florida, April 1989.

Bachelor of Arts  
Communication Arts (Cum Laude)  
University of South Alabama, June 1986.

### Professional Experience

Associate Professor and *Collegian* Adviser, Houston Baptist University, September 1998  
- Present

American Society of Newspaper Editors' Institute for Journalism Excellence Fellow,  
(Investigative Reporter, *San Mateo County Times*, San Mateo California) June-August,  
2000

Special Events Assistant, *Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS New York)*, July - August  
1992

Assistant Professor and *Collegian* Adviser, Houston Baptist University, August 1990 –  
August 1998

### Honors and Awards

ASNE Institute for Journalism Excellence Fellowship, 2000  
Faculty Woman of the Year, 1998  
Matrix Awards in writing and design, 1997  
Opal Goolsby Teacher of the Year Award, 1993  
Mark of Excellence Award, Society of Professional Journalists, 1989  
Omicron Delta Kappa (National Leadership Honor Society), 1987-present